■ **WORLD/A19**

Scientists discover gene linked to prostate cancer

■ **METRO/A17**

18 inmates hurt in riot in Camp Bagong Diwa

■ **BUSINESS/B1**

Farm sector grew 5% in 1st quarter

■ **SPORTS/A21**

Tyson Sy completes hat-trick of victories in Asian Formula 3

Mining museum to rise for Baguio centennial

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—PHILIPPINE AMBASSADOR TO Germany Delia Albert is linking Baguio's centennial celebration in 2009 to the mining industry by constructing a museum that would call attention to the country's oldest mines that surround the city.

Citing the writings of the late diplomat and ed-

MINING/A15

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, May 9, 2006 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 150 P18 website: www.inq7.net

Gonzalez tells Lacson: My kidneys a nonissue

By Armand N. Nocum and TJ Burgonio

JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL GONZALEZ YESTERday dismissed suggestions by Sen. Panfilo Lacson that he was having kidney problems and was undergoing dialysis, and countered that the senator had better explain his role in the alleged coup plot uncovered by the Leandro Aragoncillo case.

"My health is a nonissue," said Gonzalez. He

GONZALEZ/A6

Stocks soar to 7-yr high

Foreign investors push index up 4.8%

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez
Business

IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING, according to analysts.

Philippine stocks yesterday surged to a 7-year high as foreign investors stepped up their buying spree, buoyed by the country's bright economic prospects, improving government finances, solid corporate earnings, low interest rates and relative political calm.

The benchmark 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index jumped 118.93 points, or 4.8 percent, to 2,589.17 after touching 2,602.46. It was the index's best finish since July 13, 1999, when it hit 2,604.49.

The index has risen a hefty 14 percent over the past five trading sessions. Even so, investor interest remains unabated, with P5.3 billion worth of shares traded on Monday compared to Friday's value turnover of P4.9 billion.

"This is just the beginning," said Paul Joseph Garcia, chief in-

STOCKS/A15

High court orders new polls to end Thai crisis

BANGKOK—THAILAND'S CONstitutional Court yesterday ruled that last month's parliamentary elections were unconstitutional and ordered fresh polls in a bid to end the political crisis that has left the country in limbo and unable to form a new government.

The opposition Democrat Party, which had boycotted the controversial April 2 elections, promptly praised the court's ruling and pledged to take part in the upcoming polls "so the country can move forward," said party leader Abhisit Vejjajiva.

A date for new elections was not immediately set, however.

The court's widely expected ruling came after the nation's revered monarch, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, sternly suggested last month that the courts find a way out of what he called the country's political "mess."

Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra called last month's elections three years ahead of schedule to defuse antigovernment street protests and growing calls for his resignation.

But public anger continued, with an opposition boycott of the elections and hundreds of legal complaints alleging that the vote was undemocratic and unconstitutional.

The court's 14 judges voted 8 to 6 to invalidate the parliamentary elections based on a lawsuit filed by academics who accused the Election Commission of several violations, including that it had acted

HIGH COURT/A15

STATE VISIT: President Macapagal-Arroyo and Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud arrive at the Royal Palace in Riyadh for a state dinner.

JERRY CARUAL/MALACAÑANG-PCPO

GMA wins king's pardon for 50 Filipinos

By Fe Zamora

RIYADH—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo sought clemency for erring Filipino workers, got it from King Abdullah and then made a pitch to Saudi investors to consider putting up an oil refinery in Mindanao.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said at least 50 Filipino workers who had been convicted of violating Saudi laws would be going home with Ms Arroyo following their pardon by the king.

Bunye said the cases of another 141 Filipinos were being reviewed for possible pardon following Ms Arroyo's one-on-one talks with King Abdullah shortly after her arrival on Sunday for a four-day visit.

The king, he said, had "commuted" the sentences of the Filipino workers, who were convicted of crimes ranging from theft to prostitution.

But in Jeddah, the fate of seven Filipino workers who have been detained in connection with the "chop-chop" killings of three people remained uncertain, according to Special Ambassador to the Middle East Roy Cimatu.

"We will provide them with legal assistance, but they are incommunicado," Cimatu said.

Ms Arroyo urged Saudis to invest in the Philippines' energy, tourism, mining, information and communications technology (ICT) and agricultural sectors during a meeting with the Saudi Arabia Investment Authority at the Riyadh Conference Palace here.

The President said tourism and

GMA WINS/A15

HIKE (private sector)
RY HIKE (public sector)

BREATH OF FREE AIR: Collectively called the "Batasan 5," Representatives (from left) Rafael Mariano, Liza Maza, Satur Ocampo, Joel Virador and Teodoro Casiño open the gates of the Batasang Pambansa, their home for 70 days, to join their comrades waiting outside for a "victory march."

JOAN BONDOC

Gov't building up new cases vs leftist solons

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Armand N. Nocum

WHILE THE BATASAN 5 MILItants were exulting over their regained freedom yesterday, the word out of Malacañang was: It's too early for them to pop the champagne.

Solicitor General Antonio Nachura said the Department of Justice was building up a whole new set of charges against Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Liza Maza of Gabriela and Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis.

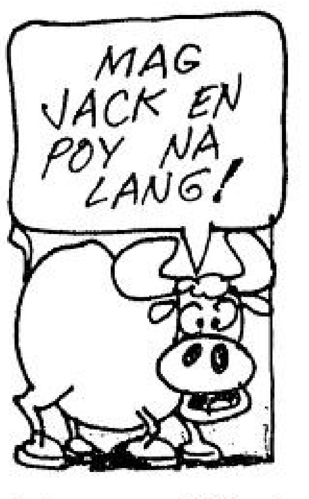
"This is what I gathered from my discussions with Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez. We're not giving up on them," said Nachura, one of the presidential advisers who helped draft Presidential Proclamation No. 1017, which placed the country briefly under a state of emergency in February and which some law enforcers tried to cite as a basis for seeking the arrest of the five militant congressmen.

Unlike the earlier complaint against the lawmakers charging them with rebellion based on acts they allegedly committed as far back as two decades ago, Nachura said the new cases to be filed against the "Batasan 5" were based on acts committed against the Arroyo administration.

"We're fairly confident that we can build a strong case against them," Nachura told the INQUIRER.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's

GOV'T/A6



MAG JACK EN POY NA LANG!

Mayoral bets to draw lots to break tie

By Edwin O. Fernandez
PDI Mindanao Bureau

KABUNTALAN, MAGUINdanao—To break a one-in-a-million tie, two politicians will draw lots to determine who between them will be mayor of this town.

This was the decision reached by election officials yesterday after mayoral aspirants Alimudin Macacua and Mike Fermin finished with 2,208 votes each after two rounds of voting. Seen as a highly emotional way of resolving an electoral deadlock but one that was provided for under the law, the

MAYORAL/A6

Fight isn't over, triumphant Batasan 5 declare

By Michael Lim Ubac, DJ Yap and Philip C. Tubeza

THE BIG SMILES, THE CLENCHED fists, the chants said it all.

Proud and defiant, the so-called "Batasan 5" party-list lawmakers strode out to freedom yesterday, ending a 70-day stand at the House of Representatives.

Supporters clasped their hands, embraced them, showered them with petals.

"The fight isn't over … *Lalaban tayo! Lalaban tayo! Lalaban tayo!* (We will keep on fighting!)," Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo thundered after he and fellow Representatives Teodoro Casiño, Rafael Mariano, Joel Virador and Liza Maza walked through the main gate of the Batasan complex.

Earlier, in a symbolic gesture, House security officer Antonio Collera shut the massive steel gate as the five lawmakers approached.

As if following a script, Ocampo and the four other legislators swung it open at about 11 a.m.

The frenzied throng of militant leaders gathered outside the gate erupted in cheers.

There were no policemen anywhere near.

The five had sought refuge in the House on Feb. 27 to evade arrest after state prosecutors filed rebellion charges against them for their alleged involvement in the rightist-leftist plot to overthrow President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The standoff ended after a Makati judge refused to accept the rebellion charges and the National Security Council ordered the police to allow the five lawmakers to leave the House freely.

But one other member of the militant lawmakers' group was clearly missing yesterday—Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran, who remained in custody on a separate rebellion charge.

The ailing Beltran is confined at the Philippine Heart Center on East Avenue, Quezon City.

FIGHT/A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, Eastern Visayas and Mindano will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over Eastern Visayas and Northeastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be cloudy isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.
COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/05/08/06 SOURCE PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

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Second FrontPage

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Is Palace punishing Karina et al.?

By Yvonne T. Chua
Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism

IS THE CAREER SERVICE EXECUTIVE BOARD (CESB), the government body that oversees the top tiers of the country's bureaucracy, being punished by Malacañang?

Many in the CESB think so. After all, in a March 20 resolution, the CESB did something unheard of: It accused Malacañang and the Cabinet of "transgressions" of civil-service laws, rules and regulations.

The strongly worded Resolution No. 619 said the unjust termination of an undersecretary, presumably Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, a career bureaucrat, and the appointment of non-civil service eligible officials "have resulted in growing apprehension and demoralization among the members of the CES (career executive service), which can further erode the institutional foundations of a professional bureaucracy."

It also reminded President Macapagal-Arroyo that in a Jan. 22, 2001 speech, she had recalled that her own father, the late President Diosdado Macapagal, had advised her to "respect the bureaucracy, respect the civil service."(Resolution 619 can be downloaded from www.pcij.org)

In return, Malacañang had reacted with a series of what appear to be punitive and retaliatory moves against the CESB.

Within days after the resolution, two of the CESB's eight members lost their seats. Two others—one of whom was reportedly forced to resign—were replaced after a couple of weeks. Insiders at the agency say the resolution also strengthened the resolve of Palace officials to replace Civil Service Commission Chair Karina David as CESB chair.

Earlier, Malacañang had withdrawn its then two-week-old nomination of CESB executive director Mary Ann Fernandez-Mendoza as commissioner at the Civil Service Commission. Mendoza had issued a ruling that Luz was a tenured civil servant who could not be summarily terminated.

Pressure on the board

Despite repeated calls since Friday, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita has not responded to queries on the CESB.

A close aide of one of the remaining CESB members says that on April 3, his boss met with a Palace emissary at a Pasig hotel and was asked to be the "swing vote" at the board's April 18 meeting. The board member was supposedly asked to vote for Resolution 619's recall and for retired appellate court justice and fresh CESB appointee Bernardo Abesamis to become the body's new chair. Abesamis would replace David who had reportedly irked Palace officials for objecting to questionable presidential and non-presidential appointments.

The board member refused. No such motions were made during the April 18 meeting, although there is no telling what will take place in the board meeting scheduled for today.

The 33-year-old CESB is the governing body of the Career Executive Service (CES), which covers the top- or third-tier positions in national government agencies and state-owned corporations, including those of undersecretary, assistant secretary, bureau director, assistant bureau director, regional director, assistant director and department service chief.

CESB veterans say the appointment of non-eligibles and unjustified transfers of CESOs and CES eligibles is not new. But the relationship between Malacañang and the board has never come under as much strain as today.

ERMITA: No response

DAVID: On way out?

LUZ: "Unjust termination"

CESB records show that of the 2,583 career executive positions appointed by the president, 42 percent are currently filled up by "non-eligibles," or those who did not have to go through the rigid process undergone by career bureaucrats.

Resolution 619 listed seven categories of personnel actions by the Arroyo administration that affect CESOs and third-level eligibles and have "undermined the principles of professionalism and meritocracy."

Transgressions

Topping the list were the termination of a department undersecretary via a thank-you letter and an order subsequently transferring him to another department, and replacement of a government corporate executive by a non-eligible outsider.

The resolution was obviously referring to the cases of Luz, a CESO 3, and former Pag-Ibig Fund president and chief executive officer Manuel Crisostomo, a CESO 1, the highest level in the system.

Resolution 619 also raised the following issues: CESOs placed on "floating" status; CESOs relieved from their CES positions and replaced by non-eligibles or demoted to non-CES positions; excess undersecretary and assistant secretary positions; political appointees designated to career positions; and non-CESOs and non-eligibles appointed to CES positions despite the availability of CESOs or third-level eligibles.

As of Jan. 31 this year, 843 CESOs and CES eligibles are occupying non-CES positions, CESB statistics show. There are 6,388 positions in the career executive service that should—ideally—be, occupied by CESOs.

Meanwhile, data from the budget department reveal that the Arroyo administration seems to have at least 22 more undersecretaries and eight more assistant secretaries than the previous government.

Despite repeated pronouncements that it has trimmed the fat in the government service, the bureaucracy under Arroyo is more bloated now than it was under Estrada. DBM records show Arroyo had 1,150,681 permanent positions in national government agencies in 2005, or 47,555 more than what Estrada had in 2000.

Jurisdiction

Many insiders say the issuance of Resolution No. 619 began with discussions regarding the case of Luz, who has since resigned from the CES.

In its Feb. 14 meeting, the board agreed to issue a resolution that would only adopt David's dissenting opinion on the case Luz had brought against Executive Secretary Ermita before the Civil Service Commission (CSC) regarding his transfer to the labor department. David, a CESB ex-officio member by virtue of being CSC chair, inhibited herself.

Present that day were David (who inhibited herself), CESB vice chair Ramon Nieva and board members Eduardo Gonzales, Fernando Cui, Godofredo de Guzman, Jarius Paguntalan, Gerardo Plana and Carina Valera.

The CSC had said it had no jurisdiction over Luz's case, although it upheld his reassignment as a "management prerogative exercised by the President" in the best interest of public service. David had dissented, saying the CSC had jurisdiction over the case, Luz had security of tenure as a CESO, and his reassignment was tainted with bad faith and not done in the interest of public service.

On March 14, the CESB decided to issue an omnibus resolution covering what it said was a wide range of violations of rules and laws affecting the CES.

Four new members

Nieva and the CESB secretariat drafted what would become Resolution No. 619, which was approved on March 20. But when the CESB met on March 24 to sign the document, Nieva had already been replaced by Abesamis, and Plana by Ma. Paz Foronda, who used to work for Bernardino Abes, now search committee head at the Office of the President.

Abesamis and Foronda immediately questioned Resolution 619's legality, pointing out, among other things, that the March 20 meeting's minutes had not been ratified. But under CESB rules, a resolution is deemed adopted on the day it is approved; its signing is ministerial.

By the time the CESB met again on April 18, Elmor Juridico, director of the Employees Compensation Commission, had replaced Cui. The Board was also told former environment undersecretary Rolando Metin would replace Paguntalan.

All four new CESB members now sit in an acting capacity. Says a CESB official: "This illustrates how politicized the situation is. President Arroyo has politicized even the CESB. Any of the new board members can be replaced any time."

Furor over DAP

But the CESB's independence may be put to a test this June, when the Development Academy of the Philippines (DAP) is scheduled to have a new president. In August, De Guzman's term at the CESB also expires, opening another vacancy in the board.

In the DAP board's March 31 meeting, Chair Jimmy Yaokasin read a "desire letter" from Ms Arroyo, who expressed her wish to have Antonio Kalaw, a DAP senior vice president, elected the next DAP chief executive. (The election of the DAP president is tentatively scheduled on May 19.)

CESB executives say that should a pro-Malacañang person become DAP head, the Palace would find it easier to muster the necessary numbers to remove David as CESB chair, as well as force through or recall certain policies. The DAP president automatically becomes a CESB ex-officio member.

No law stipulates that the CSC chair should be the CESB chair. But should David ever be removed as CESB chair, it would yet be another first. Since the CSC became a constitutional body under the 1987 Constitution, its chair has also been that of the CESB.

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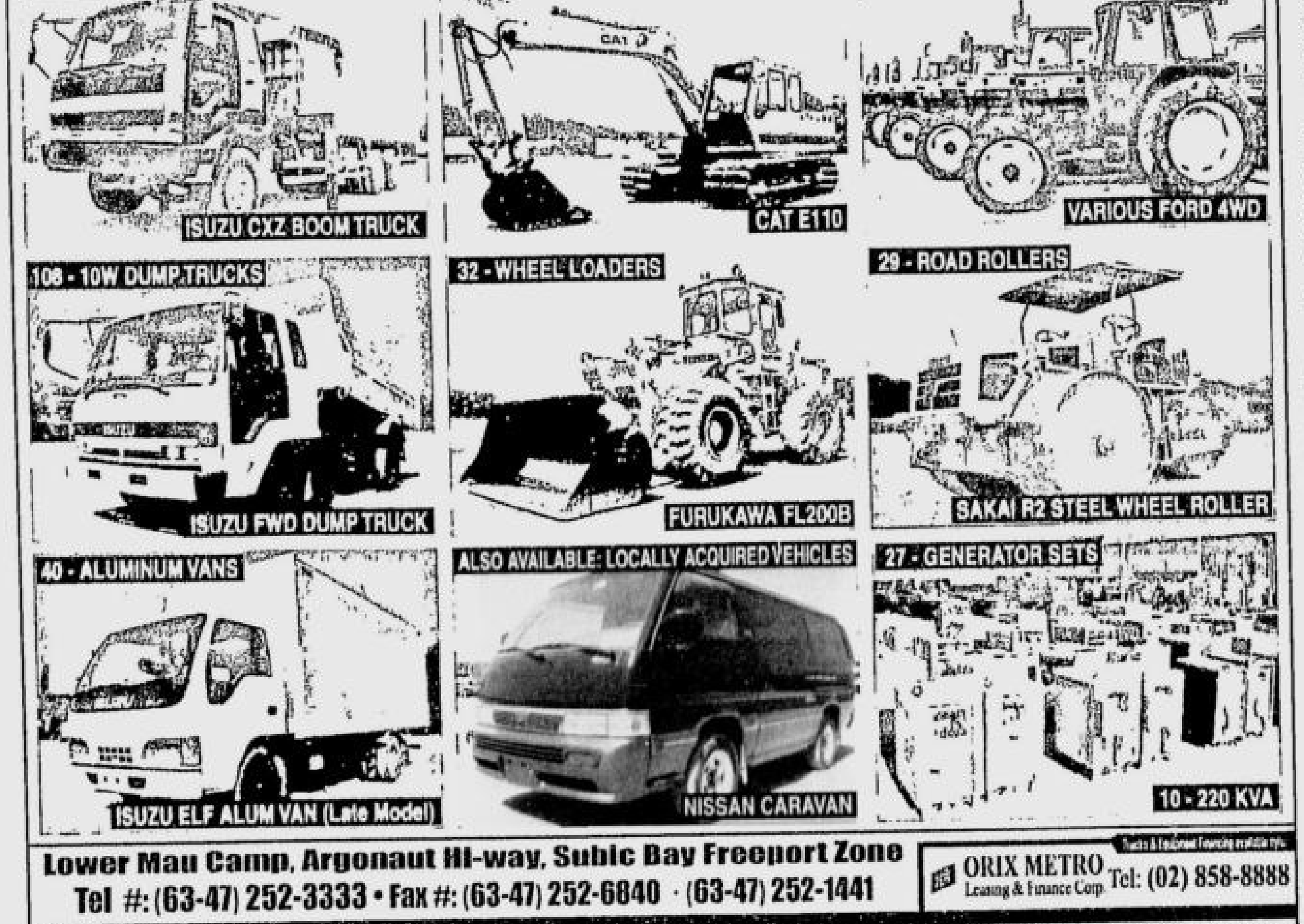

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IMPARTIALITY QUESTIONED

Judge asked to inhibit self after ruling vs DOJ

By Tarra V. Quismundo

THE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE YESTERDAY sought the inhibition of a Makati judge who rejected the inclusion of five party-list representatives, a former senator, rebel soldiers and leaders of leftist organizations in a rebellion case initially filed against Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran and Army Lt. Lawrence San Juan.

Saying she had betrayed her impartiality, a seven-member DOJ panel of prosecutors asked Judge Jenny Lind Aldecoa-Delorino of the Makati Regional Trial Court's Branch 137 to inhibit herself from hearing the rebellion case against Beltran and San Juan, one of the alleged leaders of the failed 2003 Oakwood mutiny.

San Juan was among detained Oakwood mutineers who escaped early this year but was recaptured shortly before President Macapagal-Arroyo's declaration of a state of national emergency last February and implicated in an alleged new plot to topple the President.

46 more defendants

The original case against the two remains pending in Delorino's sala after her dismissal last Thursday of a criminal indictment or information which the DOJ had amended to include 46 more defendants, including Representatives Satur Ocampo, Teodoro Casiño and Joel Virador of Bayan Muna, Rafael Mariano of Anakpawis, and Liza Maza of Gabriela, former Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan, and 40 other individuals.

"The office of the judge exists for one solemn end—to promote the ends of justice by administering it speedily and impartially. In the instant case, while the subject motion [to admit amended information] was resolved with dispatch, it was not done so with impartiality," said the prosecution's new motion.

Media interviews

The prosecution said the judge exhibited bias when she granted media interviews after issuing her resolution rejecting the amended information. Delorino gave reporters a layman's explanation of her resolution.

"She also gave interviews to the media and discussed the resolution, before the prosecution even received an official copy of the same," the motion said, adding, "Publicity undermines the dignity and impartiality of a judge."

In rejecting the information as amended by the DOJ, Delorino ruled that the modifications constituted an altogether new information that could not supplant the original case. She noted that the DOJ panel submitted documentary evidence minutes before last Thursday's hearing that should have been submitted with the proposed amended information when it was filed on April 21.

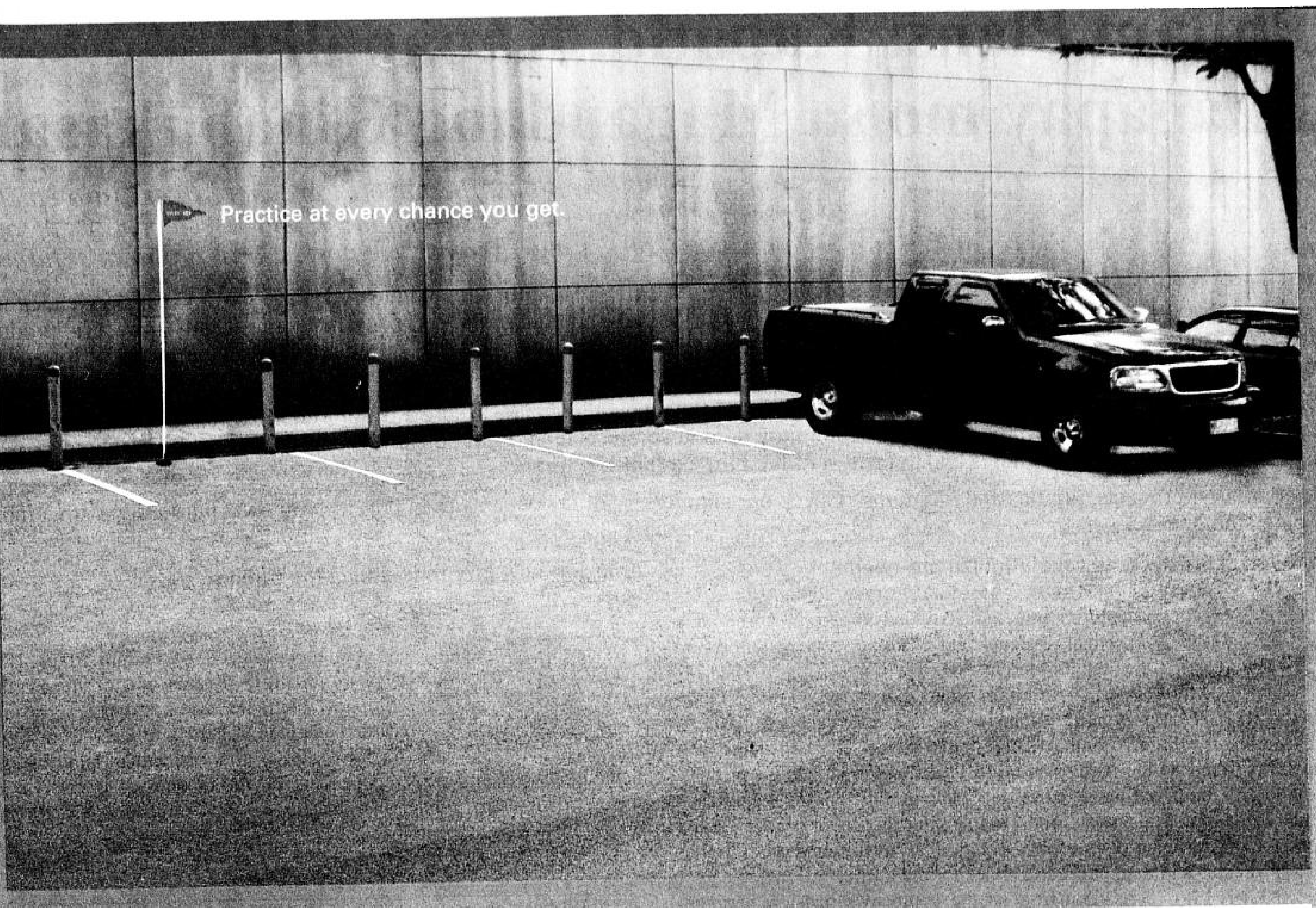
As far back as 1968

Delorino noted that while the original case alleged a tactical alliance between rebel soldiers and communist rebels in last February's alleged failed coup, the DOJ's amended case alleged a continuing rebellion that went as far back as 1968, the year the old Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas was reorganized into the Communist Party of the Philippines.

She further noted that only eight words from the original information—"hereby accuse Lawrence San Juan, Crispin Bertiz Beltran—could be found in the amended information.

Delorino's resolution came out at 5:40 p.m., almost six hours after she adjourned a hearing where prosecutors and defense lawyers argued over the proposed amendments.

"The prosecution was taken aback at the [judge's] undue haste in resolving the motion considering that it only submitted supporting documents minutes before the hearing," the DOJ motion said. "Moreover, the oral arguments on the motion had just been concluded."



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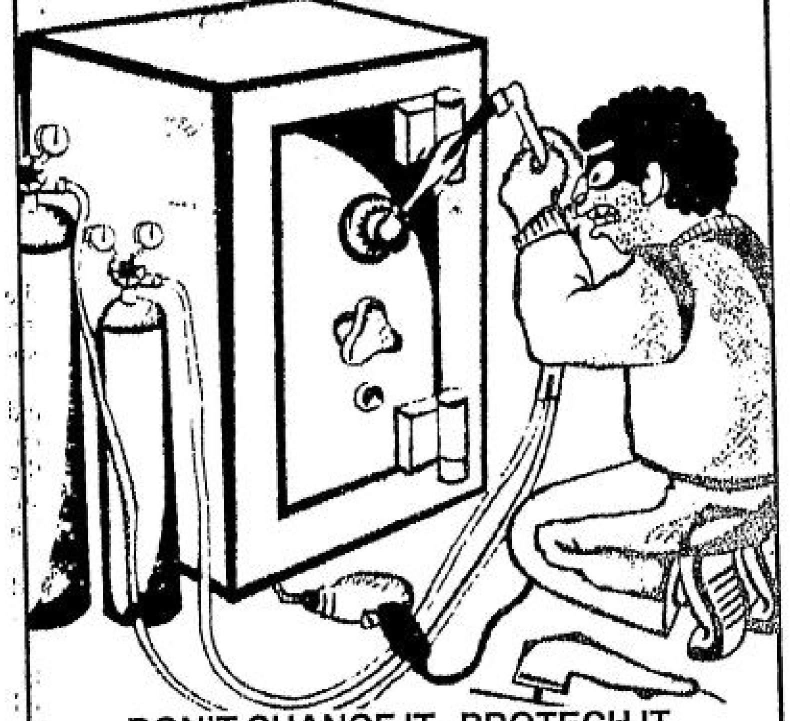

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Philam Plans just celebrated its Planholders' Day! Entitled as *"Pasasalamat at Pagkilala sa Pamilyang Philam Plans"*, this was one of the ways by which we showed our gratitude to the trust, loyalty and confidence demonstrated by our planholders. Out of the nearly 10,000 Philam Plans planholders who will receive their education benefit checks for school year 2006-2007, over 300 planholders trooped to the Philam Plans UN Business Center on the first releasing day, April 29. All participated in the different games and activities prepared by the Philam Plans employees. The parents appreciated the various tokens and raffle prizes given away as their children spent some time with activity sheets and balloon-twisted creations. Over P160 million of education benefits will be released by Philam Plans for the incoming school year covering the elementary, highschool and college beneficiaries.

That's not all! Philam Plans is also proud to announce the new and exciting Friends of Philam program. Here, planholders are encouraged to participate in the company's mission by referring friends and family to likewise secure their future and be financially prepared through Philam Plans products. Fill-out referral forms from your Philam Plans' sales associates and earn a raffle entry to a vacation trip for two to the exotic Malaysia for every successful referral! Raffle draw is scheduled on November 2006.

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Purchase Amount (First Payment)	Prizes
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P 70k-189,999	Panasonic Washing Machine 5kg. Single Tub
P 40k-69,999	Dowell Electric Griller
P 15k-39,999	Hanabishi Desk Fan 30.48cm (12")

For more details, please call the Philam Plans Call Center at 5285-200, visit the nearest Philam Plans office or get in touch with our friendly sales counselors.

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Hard work and perseverance describe a Filipino worker. In these trying times, we see more office workers pouring extra hours just to make ends meet, to keep his job and provide a comfortable and decent life for his family. As the employee exerts effort, so does Philam Plans.

To provide a safe and secured savings mechanism, we will be visiting various offices to conduct savings seminars through our "Bisita sa Opisina". Should you want the benefit of getting free financial planning seminars, please call the Philam Plans Call Center at 528-5200 or Mr. Matt Triunfante at 525-9001 loc. 297 and we would gladly schedule our "bisita" in your "opisina".

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This is our simple way of saying "Thank you!" Trust us that we shall remain true to our promise, as we have done in the past 17 years - a solid commitment supported by our financial leadership, strength and capability.

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ER. The statement that "Ahead is the official review center of major universities like UP, Ateneo and La Salle" published last April 27, 2006 should be stated as "AHEAD offers review courses for major universities like UP, Ateneo and La Salle.' We apologize for the misprint.

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PHILAM PLANS
Kapatid, Kapanalig, Kaagapay sa Magandang Kinabukasan.

Machos warned: Watch that gel, go easy with the CD

ATTENTION ALL MEN: PLAYING A CD, putting gel on your hair, or spraying perfume could, uh, decrease your sperm count or cause genital abnormalities.

Exposure to hazardous man-made chemicals found in common household items has caused a decrease in sperm count and quality, as well as an increase in infertility and genital abnormalities, Greenpeace said in its latest report.

The report, released in April, collated past studies that showed a possible link between the rise of reproductive health disorders and the increase of man-made chemicals produced every year.

Greenpeace first cited a 1992 study showing a 50 percent decrease in the sperm count of males worldwide between 1940 and 1990. This was corroborated by 2000 study, which reported a sperm count decline of about 1 percent every year.

Another study, this time done in 2005, revealed that 20 percent of young males in some parts of Europe suffer from low sperm count.

"Although not proven beyond a doubt, there is increasing evidence of a possible link between the synonymous rise of reproductive health problems and the rise of our exposure to many chemicals," Greenpeace said in its report "Fragile: Our Reproductive Health and Chemical Exposure."

There are about 100,000 different chemicals produced yearly, some with hazardous properties, and can be found in common household items, according to Greenpeace.

Among the hazardous chemicals cited in the report are alkylphenols, found in personal care products and pesticides, phthalates in gelling agents and cosmetics, brominated flame retardants in electronic appliances, organotin compounds in agrochemicals, biocides and antifoulants, bisphenol-A in plastic products like baby bottles and CDs, as well as artificial musks in perfumes and air fresheners.

Greenpeace toxics campaigner Beau Baconguis said the link established by the past studies was "extremely disturbing... The future ability of mankind to reproduce may be at stake," he said in a statement.

LJ Pasion

Senate bent on passing 2006 budget, says Recto

By TJ Burgonio

THE SENATE IS KEEN ON PASSING the 2006 national budget despite its tight schedule before Congress adjourns next month but the outlay will be lower than the House-approved P1.04 trillion, administration Sen. Ralph Recto said yesterday.

Recto said that when the Senate resumes sessions next week, Sen. Manuel Villar Jr., finance committee chair, is expected to immediately call a caucus on the long-delayed budget measure.

"I feel it is imperative to pass the budget before we adjourn," said Recto, chair of the ways and means committee, in an interview, pointing out that this would translate to "better services" for a public saddled with high taxes and soaring fuel prices.

He said the Senate was inclined to pass a lower budget because it needed to "keep a balance" between increasing the appropriations for health, education and security, among other things, and achieving a balanced budget in 2008.

"The Senate has to lower the budget deficit (projected to be P125 billion) to help consolidate our financial gains," he said.

Unless the senators approve the budget before they adjourn on June 10, the legislators will find themselves in the odd position of still deliberating the 2006 budget in July when President Macapagal-Arroyo presents the 2007 budget to Congress.

Senate President Franklin Drilon had admitted it would be a "Herculean effort" on the senators' part to scrutinize and approve the budget within the 16 session days left between May 15 and June 10, but the senators had no choice.

After months of sitting on it, the House approved the budget bill on April 4, the eve of Congress' Lenten recess. Since then, congressmen and Malacañang have been pressing the senators to pass the budget.

In the past, the measure used to be transmitted to the Senate as early as November and approved before the end of the year.

Recto said a caucus would help to define the issues that could come up when the Senate debates the budget.

"We've had informal talks of a caucus. Senator Villar will surely request Senate President Drilon to get all the senators to attend the caucus to discuss specific items that need to be clarified," he said.

Drilon had theorized that the delay in transmitting the budget measure to the Senate from the House was deliberate and calculated to clip the powers of Congress to raise and allocate public funds.

As things stood, both reenacting the 2005 budget and passing the 2006 budget would be advantageous to the Arroyo administration, he said.

PNP urged to probe labor leaders' slays

By Jerome Aning

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMployment yesterday called on the Philippine National Police to conduct an impartial investigation on the killings and attempts on the lives of labor leaders and organizers in several parts of the country.

Undersecretary for labor relations Manuel Imson also urged workers and their leaders to coordinate with DOLE's regional offices so the staff could investigate alleged violations of the workers' rights.

"While it is a police matter, the incidents (killings) are indeed alarming, thus, our PNP should look deeper into these and make the necessary actions to prevent them from recurring," said Imson, who is acting DOLE chief while Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas is with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Saudi Arabia.

Imson added that DOLE was also checking out reports of repression of union rights as cited by a team from the International Labor Solidarity Mission that recently conducted a fact-finding mission to various parts of the Philippines.

Planholders question Pacific rehabilitation plan

By Alcuin Papa

PLANHOLDERS OF TROUBLED educational pre-need firm Pacific Plans Inc. (PPI) yesterday said they would appeal a recent Makati City court decision approving a rehabilitation plan for the company.

Philip Piccio, president of the Parents Enabling Parents Coalition (PEP Coalition), told the INQUIRER yesterday that the group's members were "angry and upset" over the decision of Makati City Judge Romeo Barza.

The group said it would in addition file a contempt charge against the judge and ask that he be disbarred.

"When there is a legal and binding contract between two parties, the contract can only be changed with the consent of the two parties. We never gave our consent to the rehabilitation plan. We don't agree with it. It is unfair and biased against us," Piccio said.

Since last year, the group had been calling on the company to abide by the contract customers signed when they agreed to buy the plans.

PPI, which is owned by the Yuchengco family, sought court-approved rehabilitation in April 2005 after it said it could no longer pay the proceeds of open-ended education planholders, citing skyrocketing increases in tuition and other school fees that put pressure on its trust funds.

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Fight isn't over, Batasan 5 declare

From page A1

House minority members, led by Rep. Francis Escudero, and opposition Sen. Jamby Madrigal escorted the militant congressmen out of the House complex.

A lone police car stood by 2 km away.

Accepting defeat

Climbing atop a van, Ocampo told the crowd that the Cabinet cluster committee on internal security had "accepted defeat."

"There is no rebellion case against us and no justification to block us, or arrest us!" he said.

Raising his left fist, Ocampo said: "We won during the years of martial law. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will not want a repetition of those times. We will fight."

Arms linked, the lawmakers and their supporters then chanted "Gloria, terrorist."

Breathe the free air

They marched briefly to Commonwealth Avenue near the Sandiganbayan and then motored to the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

"Now, we can breathe the free air," Maza said. But she also said that the threat of arrest continued to hang over their heads.

"Justice prevailed," Mariano said. "We proved from the very beginning that we had nothing to do with the fabricated, manufactured rebellion case."

Young Harvey

A shower of bougainvillea petals rained on the lawmakers when they arrived on the UP campus.

For 14-year-old Harvey Rafael Virador, son of Representative Virador, his father's release simply meant the family's return to "normal life."

"Now, we'll be able to do the things we used to do, like go to the mall or have outings at the beach or the park," he said.

Satur Ocampo's wife, activist writer and former UP journalism professor Carolina Malay, said her husband was a free man again.

"There are many Filipinos who are very good ... This is a government we don't deserve," Malay said.

Countersuit planned

Mariano's wife Lita said: "On top of worrying about my husband, I was also worried that the government would take it out on our children."

The counsel for the Batasan 5 said the group was preparing criminal, civil and administrative cases against Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, state prosecutors and police officials for allegedly conspiring to frame them.

Lawyer Romeo Capulong said the group will sue Gonzalez and the others so that the abuses his clients endured would not be repeated.

Disciplinary action

He added the group would ask for "disciplinary action" against the government lawyers.

"We have to show our people that these things should not be allowed to pass and be committed over and over again," Capulong said.

Besides Gonzalez, the other officials the group will sue include Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño, the DOJ panel of prosecutors and ranking Philippine National Police officials.

"Someone must answer for what happened," Casiño said.

The human rights group Karapatan said the stand taken by the Batasan 5 and Beltran would strengthen the campaign against Ms Arroyo.

"(They) have asserted their rights to due process ... That is what every Filipino should do—stand up against any affront to our rights," Karapatan secretary general Marie Hilao-Enriquez said. *With reports from Norman Bordadora, Scott James Roxas and Kenneth del Rosario*

BAYAN MUNA Rep. Teodoro Casiño carries his son during the "victory march" at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

ALANAH TORRALBA

Party-list lawmaker loses cell phone

By Philip C. Tubeza

WHILE THE "BATASAN 5" lawmakers were regaining their freedom yesterday with a march out of the Batasang Pambansa complex, a fellow party-list congressmen accompanying them was losing his mobile phone.

Partido ng Manggagawa (PM) Rep. Renato Magtubo said he lost his Nokia 6230 to thieves during the crush at the gate.

"I had it with me in my left pocket, but when I checked it later, it was already gone," Magtubo said.

He said he would just charge what happened to experience.

"I had put my two cell phones in my left pocket when we marched out. I was happy that we were accompanying our friends to freedom," Magtubo said.

Besides Magtubo, the opposition lawmakers who joined the march were Minority Leader Francis Escudero, Representatives Loretta Ann Rosales, Joel Villanueva, Teofisto "TG" Guingona III, Juan Edgardo Angara and Vincent "Bingbong" Crisologo.

Apparently, it was not just the supporters of the Batasan 5 who were waiting outside the gate.

"When we got outside, I heard that one of our friends in the media lost a cell phone so I checked mine. When I felt my pocket, my phone was already gone," Magtubo said.

Batasan 5 leader Rep. Satur Ocampo, at a press briefing, joked that he was looking forward to resuming his "domestic duties" since the laundry had piled up at home during his stay of more than two months in Congress.

Division of labor

"What I miss are the things I do at home ... There is a big pile of unwashed clothes that I have to attend to when I get home," Ocampo kidded.

He said it was just he and his wife who were living in their house.

"I do the laundry and clean my room. I also take care of the garden. For these past 70 days, she was the one who did all of that and so she's tired," he said.

"She said I'm welcome back home to resume my domestic duties," he added.

Gonzalez tells Lacson: My kidneys a nonissue

From page A1

told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview that he underwent dialysis once but that was two years ago, and that he had never had it again.

"I underwent dialysis due to a high potassium content, which was affecting my heart. That is why I no longer eat banana, which is high in potassium," he said.

Asked if his kidneys were affected, the 75-year-old Gonzalez said no and that he was healthy and strong and could face the media every day.

Gonzalez said he had expected Lacson's tirade. "What can I expect from him? It's not like he's going to flatter me."

In an earlier interview with reporters, the secretary said Lacson should be more concerned about the alleged coup plot.

Blueprint for a coup

"I was told by somebody that he had already downloaded the Aragoncillo testimony from the Internet and, among other things, Aragoncillo had said that he sent a blueprint for a coup d'etat to (Lacson)," he said.

Although he had yet to see the testimony, Gonzalez said the matter would be "significant" if it turned out to be true.

Reacting to Solicitor General Eduardo Nachura's statement that the government should go slow on Lacson, Gonzalez said: "I'm not saying that we are going faster. What I'm saying is that we will analyze (Aragoncillo's admission of guilt to charges of espionage)."

It bears looking into the "exchange of communications" among Lacson, former President Joseph Estrada and others in their alleged plot to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo, he said.

Gonzalez earlier said his department was reviewing Aragoncillo's plea bargain with the hope of using it as a basis to charge them with rebellion.

Passing info for 5 years

Aragoncillo, 47, admitted before a court in Newark, New Jersey, on Thursday that for five years he had passed on to Philippine opposition leaders top secret information pilfered from computers in the White House and the FBI where he used to work as an intelligence analyst.

Arrested in September 2005, along with former Philippine police official Michael Ray Aquino, Aragoncillo was charged with espionage.

The Philippine-born US citizen did not name the recipients of his stolen files, but documents filed in the US court said they included Lacson, Estrada and former Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella.

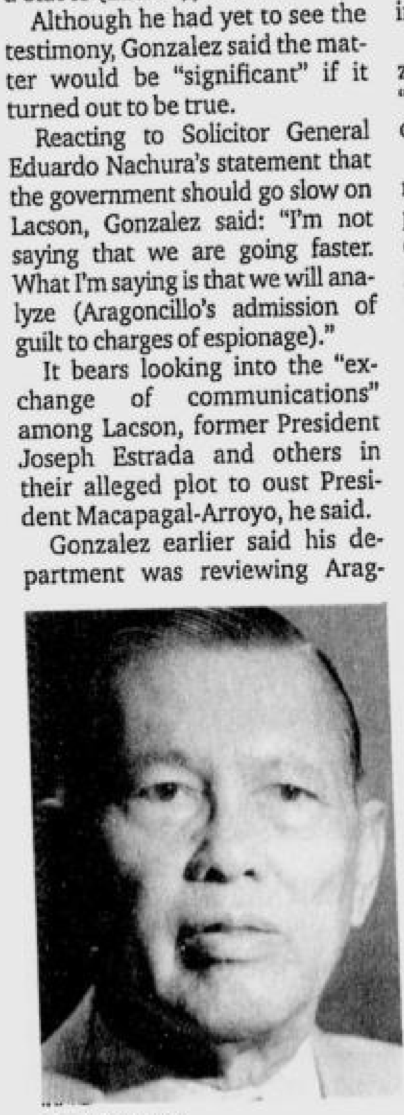
Law on spying

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon yesterday said the Senate select committee on intelligence, which he chairs, was considering inquiring into the Aragoncillo case to establish if the country had a law punishing spying.

As far as he could recall, Biazon said only the Articles of War "deal with the crime of espionage."

"In the Articles of War, the definition is vague. If we are going to put up a law criminalizing the act of espionage, we must now put together a definition that is appropriate for the present situation in the world," said Biazon, a former Armed Forces chief of staff.

"It may be time for us to define what is espionage. Definitely, anything that is inimical to the interest of the republic should be dealt with by law and should be prevented by the enactment of this law," he said.



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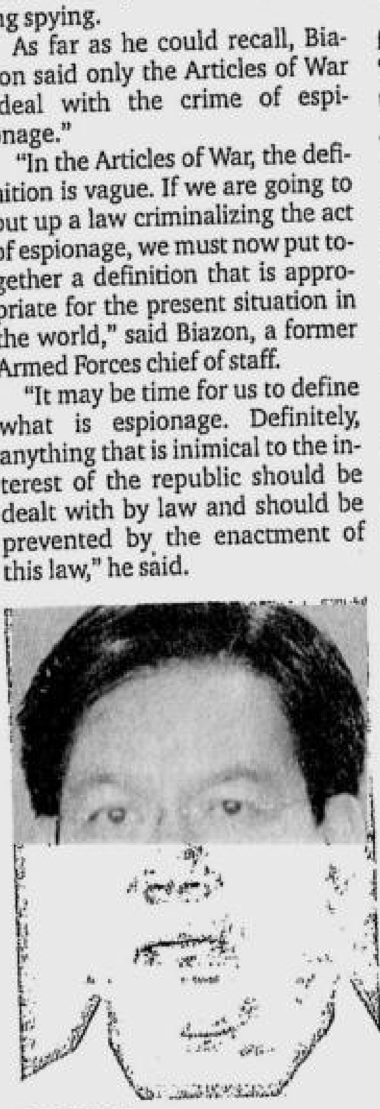


LACSON

Gov't building up new cases vs leftist solons

From page A1

adviser on political affairs, Gabriel Claudio, hinted that the government intended to pursue legal cases against the Batasan 5 despite their release.

"It is clear that the decision to let the Batasan 5 walk away is without prejudice to whatever reinforced legal action the government may take against them in the light of last week's decision of the Makati RTC," Claudio said, referring to the Makati Regional Trial Court's decision not to include the five in the rebellion complaint against Anakpawis Rep. Crispin Beltran.

Claudio said the Batasan 5 had no basis for filing countercharges against the DOJ and the authorities.

'Go back to the mountains'

"It is inappropriate for such charges to be filed given the circumspection and prudence the DOJ exercised in not ordering the arrest of the Batasan 5 when they left the House premises," he said.

Claudio said the department's decision not to touch them "averted not only a physical confrontation at the Batasan but also an undeserved political drama with the Batasan 5 as heroes and government as villains.'"

Gonzalez's reaction to taunts from the Batasan 5 was succinct: "I hope they go back to the mountains."

Won't let go

"They can run but they can't hide," he said in an impromptu press briefing. "The law will take its course under due process. I assure them that we do not manufacture evidence as they have been claiming."

Gonzalez said there was no way that the government could let them off easy because the rebellion case against them had not been withdrawn and they had not been acquitted.

"The refusal of the judge to accept the amended information was just a technicality, that was not an acquittal ... the five have not been arraigned yet," he said.

Asked if the administration would eventually arrest the five, Gonzalez replied: "We will have to go through the process because we are talking about the rule of law."

He said that in view of the Makati court's ruling, "we can just file a new (information) and ask for a consolidation."

He said he had already ordered Chief State Prosecutor Jovencito Zuño to take this initiative.

Not yet off the hook

Asked if the five lawmakers were now off the hook, Gonzalez answered: "They can only be off the hook if they are acquitted."

And queried if they could be arrested anytime, Gonzalez answered yes.

He said the DOJ would file a motion for the inhibition of Makati Judge Jenny Lind Deloriano for being purportedly biased when she refused to accept the information against the Batasan 5.

In allowing the five congressmen to go free, "we just simply recognized the technicality that ... there was no information against them in court," Gonzalez said.

He added: "We could have invoked and insisted to prove our manhood [by arresting them], but that will not prove anything. We are in a 'damned if you do and damned if you don't' situation."

Sticky mess

Gonzalez insisted that the government continued to have a legal basis to arrest the five because they had "signed their waiver of detention" and were also liable to arrest under the principle of a "continuing crime."

Claudio said the decision of Gonzalez and the National Security Council not to arrest the lawmakers was based on the legal circumstances.

"When you are not prepared with an airtight legal basis or justification for the arrest, why get into a sticky situation that can erupt in physical confrontation and violation?" he said.

Even the Philippine National Police isn't giving up just yet on the case against the "Batasan 5" congressmen.

"It's not over," PNP spokesperson Senior Supt. Samuel Pagdilao said.

He said that while the police were under "very specific" instructions not to arrest the congressmen yesterday, the government would pursue its rebellion case against them.

"The Batasan 5 are enemies of the state," said Senior Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, spokesperson of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG).

"We are treating the members of the (Communist Party) Central Committee with kid gloves," he added. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño and Dona Pazzibugan*

Defensor to Batasan 5: I'll help if you denounce NPA

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO's chief of staff Michael Defensor has offered to help the "Batasan 5" lawmakers in their legal case on condition they denounce the communist New People's Army and its campaign of armed struggle.

If they did so, they would belie the allegation "that they are supporting the armed revolution," Defensor told the INQUIRER.

"I will personally and in my official capacity help in their case," he said in a phone interview, referring to apparent efforts by the Department of Justice to refile rebellion charges against the party-list lawmakers.

"If they will denounce the NPA and the armed struggle, everything will be easier," Defensor said, noting that the group was supposed to have taken up the "parliamentary struggle."

He said he had yet to hear them make such denunciations and noted the allegations that the lawmakers belonged to groups said to be communist fronts.

Mayoral bets to draw lots to break tie

From page A1

drawing of lots is scheduled for May 14 at the provincial capitol in Shariff Aguak town. It could be the first time such a draw is being held in the country's electoral history.

"This is one in a million and we have to break the tie through the drawing of lots," said lawyer Lilian Radam, the municipal election supervisor-designate.

97 votes

In the 2004 election, Fermin came out ahead of Macacua by 97 votes.

Protests ensued and poll officials held a special election on Saturday for those who were unable to vote in 2004.

In that exercise held in Barangay Guiwa, Macacua got 136 votes, while Fermin garnered 39, a difference—as the gods would have it—also of 97 votes.

Combining both results, the two candidates obtained 2,208 votes each, Radam said.

MILF stronghold

Guiwa is a known bailiwick of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Three ballots were declared invalid. Radam said one of the ballots had no name, the second had an Arabic entry that poll officials and watchers could not read, and the third bore the words "Mentok, Maf," the supposed aliases of the aspirants.

The counting was held at the municipal hall.

What the law says

Section 240 of the Election Code provides that "whenever it shall appear from the canvass that two or more candidates have received an equal and highest number of votes ... the board of canvassers shall proceed to the drawing of lots by the candidates who have tied and shall proclaim as elected the candidates who may be favored by luck."

Commission on Elections officials in Manila said there had been cases of elections being decided by the luck of the draw, but they involved contests at the barangay level.

More protests?

They said they could not recall mayoral contests being decided by drawing lots.

In the wake of Saturday's special election, 33 people have petitioned the Comelec to hold yet another special election, saying they failed to vote because the electoral board stopped the balloting minutes before the 3 p.m. closing time.

They claimed they were already in the vicinity of the voting center when the balloting was stopped.

Security threats

Radam said she stopped the balloting on the recommendation of the police.

"I was advised by our election deputies to stop the voting due to security reasons," she said. "The threat to our security was real so we had to stop and leave."

She denied there was a failure of election. "At least 70 percent of the registered voters had cast their votes, so there was no failure," she said. *With PDI Research*

24 RP sailors on board ill-fated Greek ship identified

By Jerome Aning and Nikko Dizon

THE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR and employment yesterday identified the 24 Filipino crewmen of the Greek-owned ship that sank off South Africa last week, including the 18 who remained missing, and assured their families of "all-out" government assistance.

Labor Undersecretary Manuel Imson announced the government help after South African authorities called off the search and rescue operations that went on for several days for the MV Alexandros T, the St. Vincent-registered ship that broke up and sank some 300 nautical miles off South Africa's eastern port city of Port Elizabeth in bad weather on May 4.

Of the 33 crew on board, seven were rescued, including six Filipinos.

Imson identified the missing seamen as Ricarte P. Luis, Jose Roy L. Abellanosa, Alejo R. Alibayan Jr., Jessie B. Viesa, Polie B. Nabarte, Christopher T. Salvador, Jose Ashley V. Vasquez, Alwin L. Bueta, Rowson S. Cabuguason, Lowie C. Deriada, Warren B. Cabia, Ferdinand R. Ilagan, Loreto B. Llastos Jr., Herminio M. Luceni Jr., Jonas D. Jaro, Joel R. Maquilan, Earl M. Galela and Dan Aldous M. Ungsod.

He said the six survivors—Allan O. Omol, Aljess F. Miranda, Lee M. Alemania, Elizer B. Paulino, Reantonio L. Vergara and Sherie R. Montano—would be repatriated to the Philippines as soon as the maritime investigation was completed.

"They shall be assisted in pursuing the appropriate benefits based on their Philippine Overseas Employment Agency standard contract and as members of the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration," he said.

Imson said the DOLE, through the POEA and in coordination with the ship's manning agent in the Philippines, Inter-Orient Agency, would pursue the benefits due all the seamen.

He said that under their contracts with the POEA, seamen lost at sea were entitled to benefits that included a $50,000-life insurance policy, $7,000 per child below seven years up to a maximum of four children, and burial benefits of $1,000.

The DOLE official said that under OWWA policy, the families of the seamen would receive P200,000 in life insurance benefits and P20,000 in burial assistance.

Capt. Jimmy Milano of Inter-Orient Agency, meanwhile, urged the families of the missing seamen not to lose hope despite the suspension of search operations.

"That's what I told them—not to lose hope," Milano told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

Milano met yesterday with the families of the 18 missing seamen to brief them on the decision of the South African maritime authorities to suspend search operations for their relatives.

Milano said an ocean-going tugboat used in search and rescue operations in the high seas had been dispatched by the Greek owner of the Alexandros T to continue scouring the area "until they see positive results."

"I was told the rescue mission would resume if the tugboat sees [something positive]," Milano said.

Military says pirates behind attack on Chinese fishermen in Spratlys

MILITARY AUTHORITIES YESTERDAY blamed pirates for a deadly attack on a Chinese fishing vessel in the disputed Spratly Islands, rejecting suggestions that Filipino troops could be to blame.

Beijing had demanded an investigation after a Hainan-based vessel was boarded by unknown gunmen on April 26, killing four Chinese fishermen and wounding three others.

The attack took place in an area of the South China Sea that is claimed by both countries along with Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam.

The 13 attackers also stole the Chinese boat's navigational and electronic equipment.

A Philippine military investigation concluded that pirates could be behind the attack, Col. Tristan Kison, spokesman for the Armed Forces of the Philippines, told reporters.

The investigators evaluated the depositions of the surviving crew members and established that "there were no (Philippine) military units in the area when that incident happened," Kison added.

"It seems like it's the doing of the pirates," he said, adding that the probe failed to establish the nationalities of the attackers.

Last week, the Chinese Southern Daily newspaper reported that Philippine ships could be behind the attack on the Jinghai 03012.

All the Spratly claimants, save Brunei, maintain a military presence in the disputed territory.

Kison said ships from other countries could also have been in the area.

"It happened in international waters. We couldn't determine what ship (was behind the attack) and what country it belongs to," Kison said. *AFP with a report from Dona Z. Pazzibugan*

GMA okay needed to release AFP report on 'Garci' tape

By TJ Burgonio

DEFENSE OFFICIALS HAVE DEFERRED anew to President Macapagal-Arroyo to decide whether to release to the Senate the military report on the "Hello Garci" tape scandal pending the finality of the Supreme Court ruling on Executive Order No. 464.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, however, said that he was not eager to get a copy of the report now since this wasn't related to the agenda of his next wiretapping hearing: allegations of electoral fraud by former Sen. Loren Legarda, among others.

The Senate committee on national defense, chaired by Biazon, had been asking for a copy of the report since late last year, and reiterated this after its contents were announced over a government TV station in early April.

In the report, the fact-finding body, headed by Vice Adm. Mateo Mayuga, cleared three generals mentioned in the Garci tapes of allegations they took part in the May 2004 presidential vote fraud.

It's now up to the President to decide whether to accede to the request of the Senate committee for a copy of the report, Defense Secretary Avelino Cruz indicated in a letter to Biazon released to the Senate press.

Since the high court ruling on EO 464 is not yet final and executory, "we have furnished your letter-request to the Office of the President for appropriate action," Cruz said in the letter.

In a landmark ruling on the EO 464, SC justices voted 14-0 to uphold Congress' right to compel government officials to appear in congressional inquiries in aid of legislation.

Cabinet men had invoked the order, which required administration, police and military officials to secure the President's consent before appearing in congressional hearings, to evade Senate inquiries.

"I will not push it at this time," Biazon said in an interview, when sought for comment on Cruz's letter. "I'm not going to push this thing to another full-blown institutional confrontation."

In the Mayuga report, the body cleared Army chief Lt. Gen. Hermogenes Esperon, Southern Command chief Lt. Gen. Gabriel Habacon and retired Lt. Gen. Roy Kyamko of charges of taking part in electoral fraud. It also cleared retired Gen. Francisco Gudani of links to the opposition.

The 70 witnesses questioned by the body did not mention any direct evidence that could link the "four gentlemen to any election fraud," Mayuga explained over the government-owned NBN station on the night of April 12.

"There's no urgency for the submission of the report in relation to the hearing I'm going to conduct," Biazon added. "But I will need that report in the confirmation proceeding of General Esperon."

Biazon said his hearing on the wiretapping scandal would resume next week and would focus on electoral fraud. He added that he was eyeing Legarda as among the witnesses.

"The committee has not yet made a decision but most probably it would be former Senator Loren Legarda because she is in possession of certain pieces of evidence," he said.

"The first thing to do is to establish if there was cheating committed. The presentation will not focus only on cheating in the vice presidential election but on the election of other national candidates," he added in a briefing.

Legarda had lodged a protest case against Vice President Noli de Castro before the Supreme Court and sought a recount of votes in 24,000 precincts in 44 provinces and cities in which she claimed she won over De Castro.

Biazon himself admitted that he decided to focus on electoral fraud, rather than on the wiretapping aspect of his inquiry, in view of Malacañang claims that the SC ruling on EO 464 was not yet final.

Israelis urged to visit RP

By Nikko Dizon

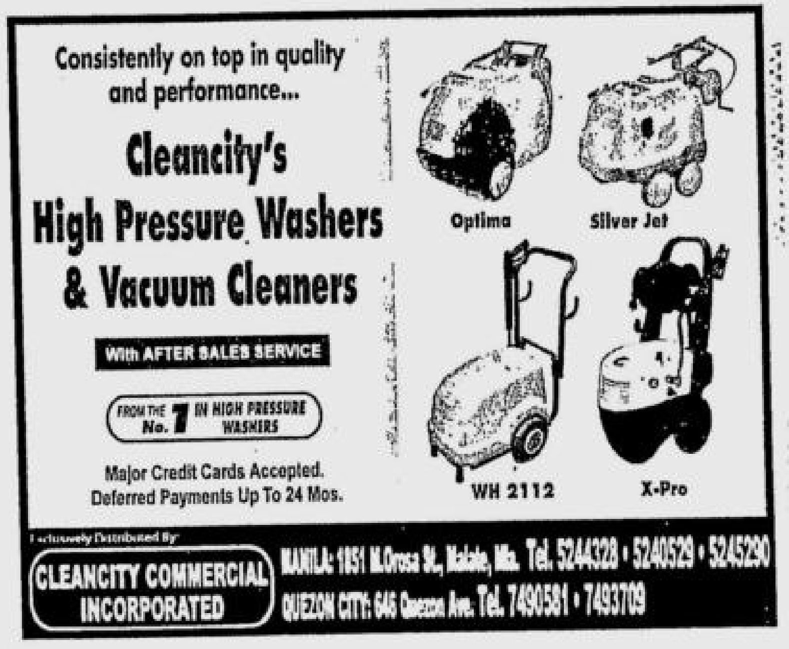
7,100 REASONS WHY iSRAELIS SHOULD visit the Philippines.

This is what the Philippine Embassy in Tel Aviv has vowed to do in promoting the Philippines as an "alternative" destination for Israeli tourists and businessmen.

The embassy recently launched Shalom Filipinim, or "Hello, Philippines " in Hebrew, its 2006 Trade, Tourism and Cultural Promotion campaign, at its newly acquired Chancery in Tel Aviv.

More than 200 Israeli businessmen, tourist operators, as well as members of the media attended the event held last April 26, according to Ambassador Antonio Modena in a report to the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA).

A summary of "7,100 reasons why the Philippines is an ideal destination for tourists and businessmen" was presented by Chester Omaga-Diaz, the embassy's Attaché for Trade, Economic, Tourism and Cultural Affairs.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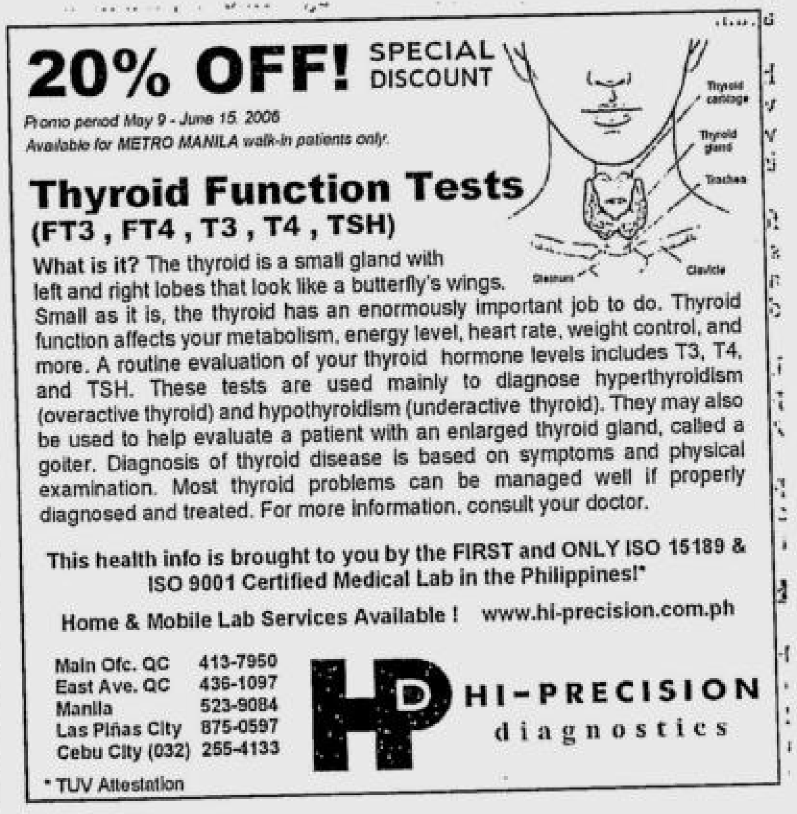
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3.	1994 Toyota Corolla XE 1.3 liters, Silver with plate no. SEA-401	1	P 121,000.00
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The said vehicles may be inspected during office hours, Monday to Friday at the SEC Parking Lot behind the SEC Building, Florida Street, Greenhills East Subdivision, San Juan City.

Bidding documents may be obtained at the General Services Division, Human Resource and Administrative Department, 4th Floor, SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City, upon payment of a non-refundabe fee of Two Hundred Pesos (P200.00) starting May 8 to 19, 2006 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. For further details, please contact Assistant Director Romeo O. Dauag at Tel. No. 727-3320.

Pre-Bid Conference will be on May 19, 2006 at 2:00 p.m. at the CRMD Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SEC Building.

Deadline for submission of bids shall be on May 24, 2006, 10:00 a.m. at the General Services Division, 4th Floor, SEC Bldg and immediately thereafter bids will be opened at the CRMD Conference Room, 2nd Floor, SEC Building.

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The SEC also assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify any bidder for any expense or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of their bids, nor does it guarantee that any award will be made at all.

May 5, 2006.

(Sgd.) BENITO A. CATARAN
Chairman
Disposal Committee

(PDI - May 9 & 16, 2006)

MWSS workers vow to make La Mesa homes clean, green

By Blanche S. Rivera

EMPLOYEE-BENEFICIARIES OF the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) housing project in the La Mesa watershed have agreed to incorporate measures to mitigate any adverse environmental impact their homes may have on the reservoir in the watershed.

House Deputy Majority Leader Rep. Edcel Lagman, the MWSS unions' legal adviser, said the employees of the former National Waterworks and Sewerage Administration (Nawasa) would attach "pro-environment conditions" to the deed of sale signed by MWSS Administrator Orlando Honrade on Feb. 25, 2006.

The conditions would include:

- The adoption of a permanent erosion control plan;
- Strict solid waste management;
- Construction of a flood control and drainage system;
- Construction of a wastewater treatment facility to be monitored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the MWSS.

Ed Alabastro, a chemical and environmental expert, said simple engineering interventions could address the environmentalists' concern that soil and household waste from the housing project could contaminate the La Mesa reservoir, the source of water for Metro Manila's 12 million residents.

"The site is not critical in slope. The major construction activities are undertaken only during the site preparation stage and for a short period. Housing constructions are undertaken sporadically… and are covered by deeds of restriction," Alabastro said.

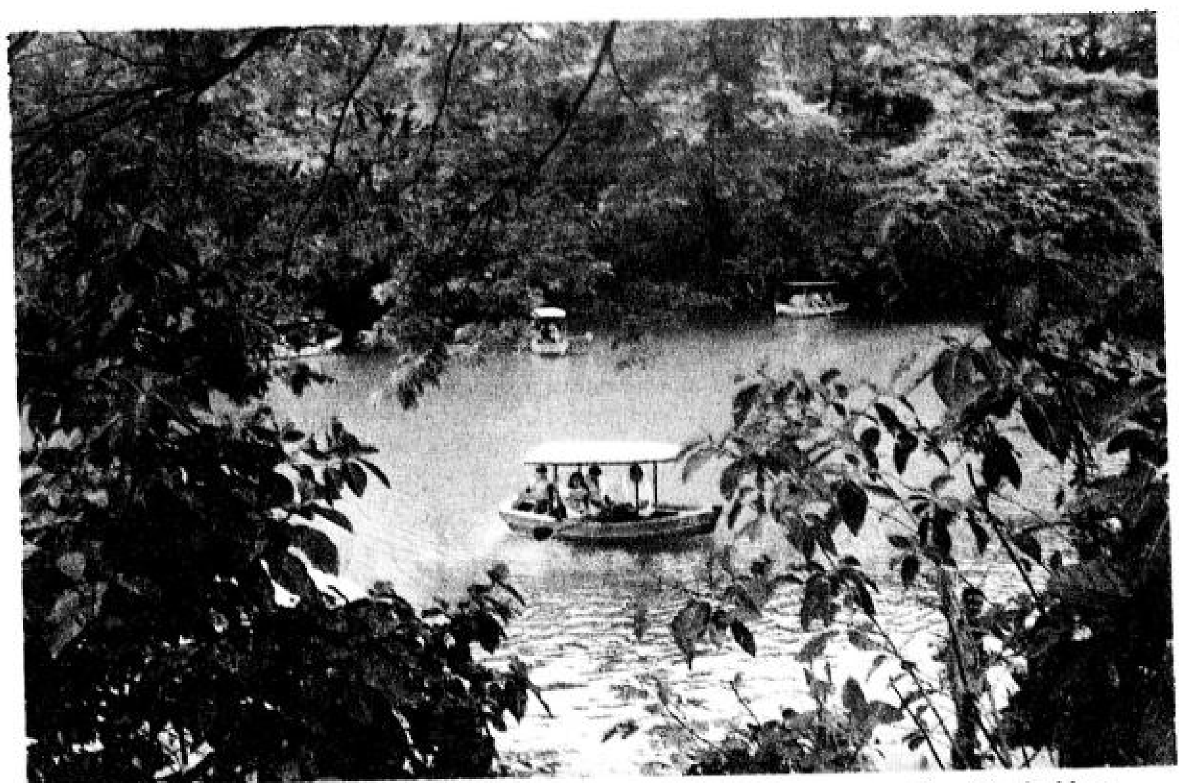
Alabastro, chair of the Philippine Environmental and Social Assessment Network at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, was tapped by the unions to comment on the MWSS-commissioned report that recommended the shelving of the housing project.

He said leaks from underground tanks and pipes that hold domestic waste could be easily prevented.

"In this age of technology, soil erosion control/prevention is most elementary," Alabastro said.

Meanwhile, the Kalikasan at Katarungan para sa Magandang Kinabukasan (KKK), a coalition of some 10 pro-poor groups formed to support the MWSS employees, said the effort to block the housing project was "a big injustice."

The KKK said there was a way of protecting the La Mesa watershed without sacrificing social justice for the 1,411 MWSS workers who received housing rights to 59 hectares of the 2,700-ha watershed.



PARADISE IN THE CITY. Families take a break from the malls and go on a nature trip at the La Mesa Watershed Resort and Ecological Park in East Fairview, Quezon City. JOAN BONDOC

"We want people to realize the importance of having the [housing] project push through. It's not true that the watershed will be affected because the project is nearly three kilometers from the reservoir," said KKK member Francisco Catibayan in a phone interview last week.

"There's no need to press the panic button and be alarmist about it because there's a technological solution to the problem," Catibayan said.

Bantay Kalikasan and the Save La Mesa Coalition, both headed by Gina Lopez, held a press conference last week to denounce the MWSS employees' housing project in the La Mesa watershed.

A study conducted by the University of the Philippines—and environmentalists—claimed the project would pollute the La Mesa reservoir. The Supreme Court had granted the Nawasa employees the rights to the land 38 years ago.

The KKK in a statement said Bantay Kalikasan did not raise a howl when the SM Fairview and Robinsons malls were put up only a kilometer from La Mesa.

Catibayan, head of the Mamamayan Ang Pag-Asa ng Sambayanan Movement, pointed out there were subdivisions located about two kilometers from the reservoir.

He said the 33-hectare La Mesa Eco Park near the reservoir run by Bantay Kalikasan received "thousands of paying visitors who use the restroom and throw trash in the park."

"If this can be safe for the… reservoir, so will the MWSS union housing project more than two kilometers away with advanced mitigating technologies to ensure that the reservoir is not polluted at all," the KKK said in a statement.

But Bantay Kalikasan and the Save La Mesa Coalition had pointed out at the press conference that the malls and subdivisions were downstream of the reservoir while the MWSS housing project was upstream of it, thus creating the possibility of household waste seeping into the reservoir.

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Moro rebels not keen on letting in mining firms

THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST MUSLIM separatist rebel group said yesterday it was not keen on allowing mining firms in its territories and that the issue will be part of its peace negotiations with the government.

The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) issued the statement after it ended informal talks with the Philippine government in Malaysia on Thursday without resolving the stubborn issue of territory and jurisdiction over Muslim land on Mindanao island.

"This mining issue has to be discussed bilaterally," MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu told Reuters by phone.

Kabalu said his group and Manila have yet to discuss when to resume peace talks aimed at ending nearly 40 years of conflict, which has killed more than 120,000 people, stunted the growth of Mindanao and clouded investment prospects in the area.

The MILF website—luwaran.com—quoted Jun Mantawil, chairperson of the MILF peace panel, as saying that the group does not welcome mining firms in its territories because they bring more trouble than good to the people.

"He said mining also invites manmade catastrophes like massive displacement, mass poisoning, human rights violations including killings and militarization," the website said.

"The mining industry rapes, extracts, denudes, divests, drains and brings forth deaths and destruction to our environment and marginalized population, especially the indigenous people," Mantawil was quoted as saying.

But Mantawil said MILF may agree to the operation of mining companies in its areas provided their operations were environment-friendly and their benefits go directly to the people.

The communist New People's Army rebels, which the government sees as the more potent security threat, has attacked mines to demand "revolutionary war taxes" to fund its nearly four decades of insurgency.

These rising threats to mining firms come at a time that the Philippine government is trying to lure between $6.5 and $8.5 billion in capital for 23 priority mining projects and 37 exploration deals to revive the sector after years of neglect.

The government has said it needed foreign investors to tap an estimated $1 trillion worth of mineral wealth.

The Philippines is ranked among the world's top five for its deposits of copper, nickel, iron ore and is geographically closer to resource-hungry China than the region's other major mining center Indonesia. *Reuters*

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'Da Vinci' seen as a test of faith for Catholics

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE CONTROVERSY GENERATED BY THE best-selling novel "The Da Vinci Code" and its Hollywood adaptation will be a moment of "purification" for Catholics, a leader of the local Roman Catholic Church said yesterday.

Fr. Sid Marinay, vice chancellor of the Archdiocese of Manila, said the controversy would result in a Church essentially winnowed of "nominal Catholics" or those whose faith is shallow and largely dependent on mere affiliation.

"This is real purification—those with strong faith will remain while nominal Catholics will fall out of the fold," he told the INQUIRER after a press conference announcing the renovation of the 40-year-old structure of the Saint Mary Goretti Parish at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center compound in Manila.

But the process shouldn't mean that Catholics who might be swayed by the juicy—though previously debunked—propositions of the Dan Brown novel should be left alone in their fall, the priest said.

He said this possibility should, in fact, encourage stronger education and a more vigilant evangelization on the part of the Church hierarchy.

"These are critical times for the Catholic Church. There are too many attacks left and right," he said, citing the controversial Gospel of Judas.

But while the Gospel of Judas issue faded as quickly as it surfaced, courtesy of the National Geographic Channel special last Holy Week, the one triggered by "The Da Vinci Code" might remain much longer.

The film starring Oscar winner Tom Hanks is set for global release on May 19 (May 18 in the Philippines).

Church leaders and groups, particularly the Opus Dei, have been abuzz in an attempt to correct historical and theological inaccuracies contained in the book, and probably, in the movie as well.

Marinay said people today were basically under threat from "post modernism," a belief that espouses relativism, meaning the absence of absolute truths, be it social, cultural, or religious. The belief runs counter to sacred Catholic teaching that holds the existence of the ultimate truth.

No less than Pope Benedict XVI, even when he was still Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, devoted much of his time trying to lead the Catholic flock out of the waters of relativism.

"For post modernism, everything is just another story and the doctrines and the scriptures are just another version of a story," Marinay explained. "We are being reduced to relativism."

Marinay said one important response was to come up with "visible signs of faith" such as churches. "There must be signs of faith. People basically believe in what they see. We need to make our churches beautiful," he said.

The argument partly explains why Marinay and his fellow clergymen are working to raise P2 million for the rehabilitation of the Saint Mary Goretti Parish in time for its silver anniversary as a parish next year. Some of the country's most prominent singers have agreed to hold concert at the Araneta Coliseum on May 26 in support of the parish.

Anti-porn group threatens to file complaint vs MTRCB

AN ANTI-PORNOGRAPHY GROUP YESTERDAY said it will file a complaint today against the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board for allowing the importation of the film "The Da Vinci Code." The Philippine Alliance Against Pornography said the film violates Presidential Decree 1986 which bars the MTRCB from importing any film that are deemed libelous or defamatory to the good name and reputation of any person, whether living or dead. The complaint will be filed before the Commission on Human Rights, said PAAP spokesperson Aldo Filomeno. *Norman Bordadora with Scott James Roxas*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, May 9, 2006
4th Week of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 11:19-26
Gospel: John 10:22-30

The time came for the feast of the Dedication. It was winter and Jesus walked back and forth in the portico of Solomon. The Jews then gathered around him and said to him, "How long will you keep us in doubt? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I have already told you but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name proclaim who I am, but you don't believe because, as I said, you are not my sheep.

"My sheep hear my voice and I know them; they follow me and I give them eternal life. They shall never perish and no one will ever steal them from me. What the Father has given me is stronger than everything and no one can snatch it from the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

Commentary

The persecution of the Church, beginning with the martyrdom of Stephen, gives a life force to the Church and spurs missionary activity. Barnabas and Saul (Paul) work diligently in Antioch, and as the Church grows, they acquire a new name: Christians, or the followers of the Way.

The word and the works of Jesus are his witness that lays claim to who he truly is—the beloved child of God the Father. And Jesus' sheep continue with that word, and they work—as witness to the presence of the Shepherd with us still.

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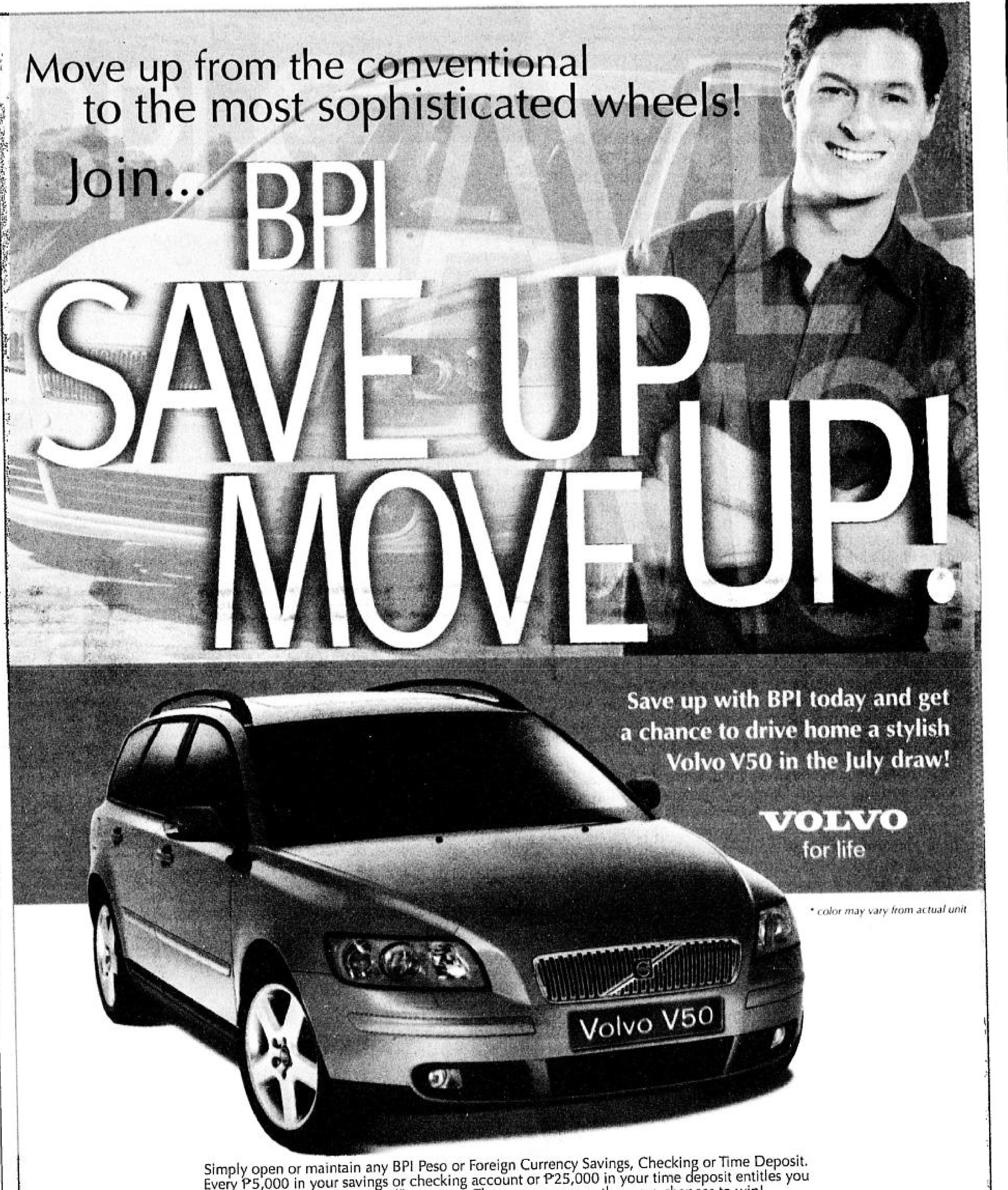

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Hungry millions

EDITORIAL

MORE FILIPINOS ARE GOING HUNGRY, ACCORDing to a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations last March. The survey showed that about 2.8 million families had nothing to eat at least once in the past three months. The hunger level rose from 16.7 percent in December 2005 to an all-time high 16.9 percent in March.

Almost 700,000 families (about 3.5 million people) or 4.2 percent reported experiencing severe hunger, which was defined in the survey as going hungry often or always in the past three months. About 2.1 million families or 12.7 percent experienced moderate hunger or hunger once or a few times in the same period.

The SWS findings seem to indicate that all the economic indicators that the administration is boasting of—a 5.7 percent increase in the gross national product in 2005, the rising value of the peso against the dollar, the surge of share prices by 4.81 percent, etc.—do not mean much to the masses who are experiencing hunger and poverty.

Mahar Mangahas, SWS head, at a briefing last year on the incidence of hunger and poverty in the country, said, "Stop looking at the GNP (gross national product)." He said the Philippines has a "maldistributive economy," one that exhibits significant GNP growth but is characterized by unabated hunger and poverty, progressive belt-tightening and reduced economic opportunities for the poor.

The belt-tightening is a very real phenomenon. In January, the SWS noted that the number of household heads who considered themselves poor jumped back to 57 percent after falling to 49 percent in August 2005 (from 57 percent in May 2005). The SWS said that "the failure of the [money-value] thresholds to increase despite much inflation is a sign that the poor are actually lowering their real living standards."

Why are millions of Filipinos going hungry? Because they are poor. And why are they poor? Because they have no jobs, or because they get very low salaries and wages. The poorest of the poor are generally those with little education and training. They could earn more if they, or their children, could be given some education.

Some people have some education and training, but they are unemployed because there are not enough jobs in the country. Millions leave for other countries where there are better job opportunities, but to start with they must have some economic resources such as land or carabaos that they can mortgage to raise money for recruitment fees.

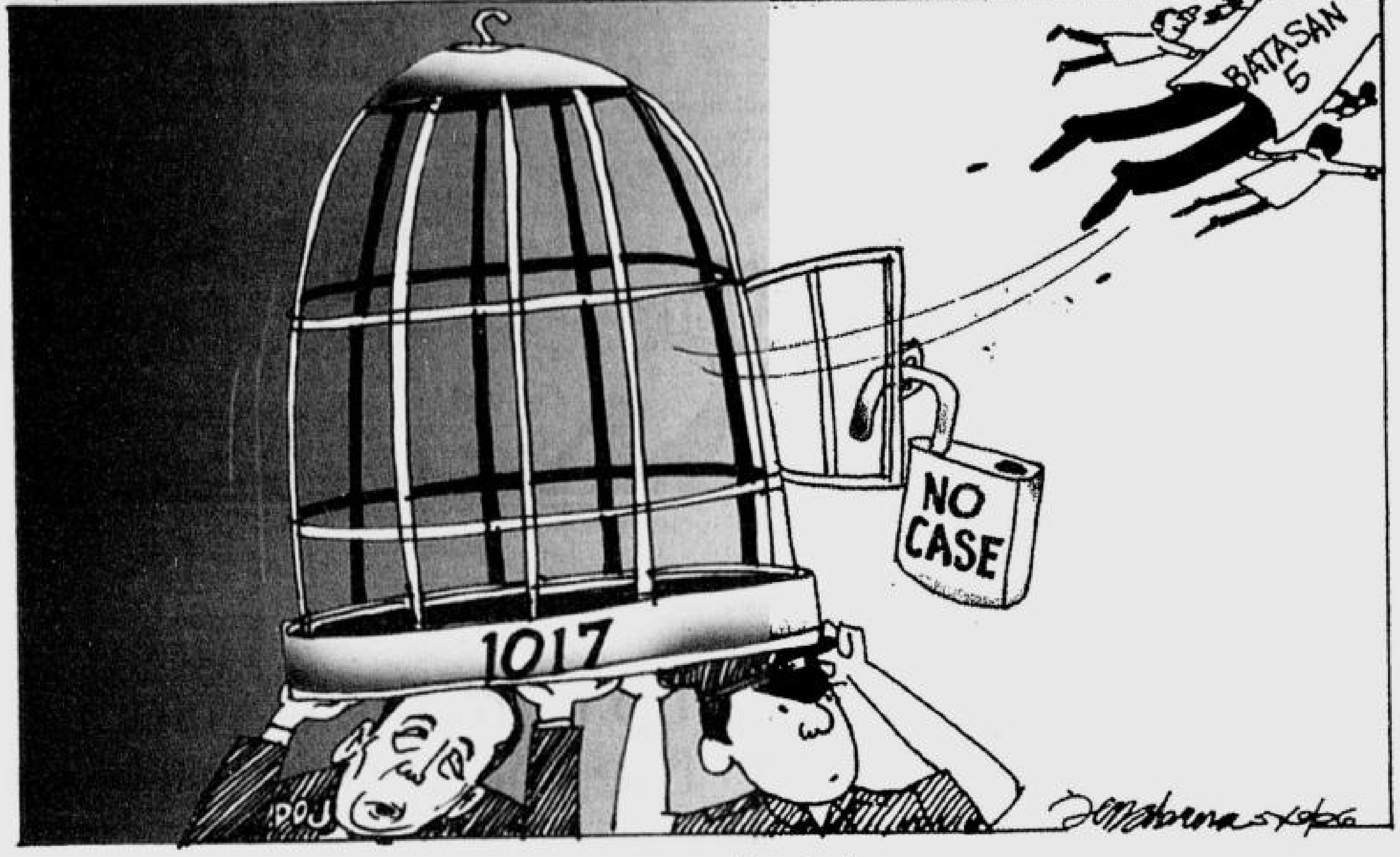
Thousands of other unemployed people could improve their economic status if they could be given some capital so that they can start small enterprises. Some micro-financing program has to be developed by the government and the private sector to promote entrepreneurship.

A study made by economist Emmanuel de Dios showed that poverty is highest among landless farm workers. Two-thirds of all poor families in the country live in the rural areas. If the agrarian reform program could be accelerated, the perennial problems of poverty and hunger in the rural areas could be mitigated.

De Dios also said that "the principal reason poverty has remained high is the economy's simple failure to grow rapidly enough, sustain that growth, and generate employment." Something has to be done to promote a faster and higher growth rate and create jobs for more people. At the same time, something has to be done about the high population growth rate (2.05 percent). Only last Wednesday, the United Nations Population Fund said that the Philippines would remain a poor nation unless it found a more effective way to curb its rapid population growth.

Several months ago, a TV station showed in one of its programs a new enterprise: the "*pagpag*" sidewalk vendor. "Pagpag" is leftover food that is scavenged from garbage cans, shaken to remove the dirt and fried with tomatoes and onions in leftover cooking oil or boiled in water with some vegetables and then sold as viand at P10 per serving. Many very poor families eat this to assuage pangs of hunger. Or else they subsist on rice and *toyo* (soy sauce) or *patis* (fish sauce). These are the families that often experience extreme hunger.

It is said that God must love the poor because He made so many of them. But poverty need not be a permanent condition. A civilized and humane nation cannot continue calling itself such if it can sleep soundly at night while millions of its people go to bed without having even a morsel of food during the day.



Cramped vision

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

"THE POWER TO TAX," JUSTICE JOHN MARshall once wrote, "involves the power to destroy."

Now, Cebu City is toying with village-level taxes. In the process, it may yet wreck emerging tax systems in 41,943 barangays, scattered over 7,107 islands.

Mayor Tomas Osmeña pledged to gut the tax base of Lahug, a well-managed Cebu barangay. How? He'd smudge boundaries in official maps.

Lahug's built-up areas include the Marco Polo Hotel, cybertech Asiatown IT Park, Grand Convention Center, Waterfront Hotel and Casino and Park Lane. Part of levies they pay, under current laws, are retained by the barangay. That system applies in Baguio, Iloilo or Davao.

He'd chop off these "plum areas" from Lahug, Osmeña announced. The slabs would be shunted to four neighboring barangays

By "coincidence," the opposition's multi-awarded Mary Ann de los Santos is *capo* of Lahug. In every election, Osmeña has been trounced there. By "happenstance" too, Osmeña partisans rule the four barangays that'd get "plum areas."

"Logic and taxation are, at best, nodding acquaintances." But there's logic in local governments retaining part of levies collected: taxes should benefit places where they were earned.

The late Sen. Emmanuel Pelaez gave the first impetus to this approach with his Barrio Charter Law in the mid-1950s. The Local Government Code of 1991 broadened this tack.

Retained taxes give substance to "local autonomy" for barangays. "Local autonomy was advanced by expanding local government taxing authority and devolving expenditure responsibilities," the Asian Development Bank notes in "Decentralization in the Philippines."

Dismemberment would gut the tax base of Lahug. Exacting a political pound of flesh makes short shrift of good governance. The method in this madness is crude to be sure. But lack of finesse is not a felony. Nor is it clinical lunacy.

Mayors have no power, as the law stands, to scrub boundaries at whim. That's the function of local councils. And setting boundaries require specific criteria, so political expediency does not supplant reason. "Sanity calms," Bertrand Russell wrote. "But madness is more interesting."

From experience, the mayor knows that Cebu councilors wilt at his first snarl. Hence, constructive criticism—whether on vigilante executions, lack of water policy or shoddy schools—has atrophied.

"I am the king's good servant but God's first," England's chancellor Thomas More said of the loyal opposition. More's proclamation has been rewritten, in the Council's moral wasteland, to read: "We are also God's good servants but Tomas' first."

Nature abhors a vacuum. This basic law of physics is also true in politics. In Cebu, citizens now fill the vacuum stemming from the council's abandonment of duties.

Thus, taxpayers hauled Osmeña to court when he blockaded, with decrepit City Hall buses, the six-lane Coastal Road to southern Cebu. Thousands of commuters were harassed for 196 days.

Lift that blockade, the regional trial court ordered, stressing that City Hall had no authority over a national highway.

Journalists ripped the decade-long secrecy, clamped on by City Hall, on the implosion of Osmeña's yen loans for his South Reclamation Project, due to serial devaluation of the peso. These IOUs now strap every man, woman and child in the city with a repayment burden of over P60,645—double the national level. Of 117 cities, Cebu has the biggest liabilities, the Commission on Audit reports.

Throughout this brawl, the councilors kept zippered lips. Indeed, as Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "the cruelest lies are often told in silence."

A firestorm erupted, following the mayor's plan for barangay financial castration, without a by-your-leave of the council or the taxpayers.

"Here we go again," dySS commentator and Golden Dove awardee Bobby Nalzaro wrote. "Osmeña acts as if Cebu were his personal property."

The criticisms compelled Osmeña to heatedly deny he is harassing Lahug or Ms De los Santos. "I'm only serving the needs of the people," he said.

But so far, he hasn't come up with a technical fig leaf to justify monkeying with barangay tax systems. He did vaguely mumble about the "need for adjustment." Is that all?

It's also a bizarre concept of service. And it mocks the universal standard set by the Master from Galilee: You are not to lord it over others but serve rather than be served.

Councilors have, meanwhile, been left twisting in wind. When they approve the blue-penciling of boundaries, as Osmeña assumed they would, what excuse will they peddle? "Shivers in search of a spine," one Australian prime minister once said, are anything but credible.

Philippine decentralization experience underscores two key areas where intensive work is needed, the Asian Development Bank says. These are: (1) how to broaden local government unit access to resources for development; and (2) how to set up "cross-cutting procedures" to ensure accountability.

These are complex tasks. The last thing they need is tampering with tax systems for political vendettas because as Justice Marshall said, "taxes involves the power to destroy."

Will Cebu taxpayers allow blatant manipulation of barangay tax bases? If they do, its destructive effects would spill beyond where Osmeña's vision ends: the cramped borders of his city. But barangays from Cagayan to General Santos may find their coffers emptied.

"I'm only trying to spread the butter," Osmeña explained.

Yes, yes. His minions know which side their bread is buttered on.

Footnote to a farce

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LEANDRO ARAGONCILLO HAS ADMITTED that during the last five years he had been passing top secret information from the White House and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to Filipino leaders out to topple GMA. Seemingly the gravest thing in the world, it is in fact the funniest. Seemingly a tragedy, it is in fact a farce.

Its farcical nature was driven home to me by an American friend of mine. Correct him if he was wrong, he said, but wasn't the "top secret information" passed on by Aragoncillo to Filipinos information about the Philippines and about Filipinos, specifically GMA? If so, where did the "top secret information" come from? Didn't it come from Filipinos themselves, many of whom are well-placed officials who supplement their income, or plunder, earning dollars by passing off information about local politics to the CIA?

And if so, isn't this a case of Filipinos clandestinely leaking information to the American government only to have the same information clandestinely leaked back by a Filipino-American to Filipinos? "Saturday Night Live" could have a field day with it.

Aragoncillo's indictment in fact is not unlike the "Hello Garci" tape. They are both cases of a priest seeing a naked man smoking in church and berating him for smoking. They miss the bigger crime. Aragoncillo is being indicted for spying in America for Filipinos, but nobody is being indicted for spying in the Philippines for the Americans. One may always argue, of course, that it is next to impossible to give "top secret" information about the Philippines to Americans because in the Philippines, nothing is secret, top or not—not even coups. But the same thing can be said of Aragoncillo's leaks: Given that they are probably recycled stuff from the Philippines, what can be so top secret about them?

In the "Hello Garci" tape also, the people who made the tape were threatened with all sorts of legal action for wiretapping but not one of those who appeared in it was so. In this country, the bigger—no, the only—crime is wiretapping, not being wiretapped plotting with a Comelec official to steal the vote.

The farce goes further. Raul Gonzalez, the secretary of justice in Malacañang Newspeak, says the government will file rebellion charges against Joseph Estrada and Panfilo Lacson if it was proven that the Aragoncillo espionage case was linked to a local plot to unseat GMA.

Well, to begin with, every time I see Gonzalez, I remember a joke told to me by an Indonesian friend. When Suharto was still in power, he said, he decided one day to decree that henceforth the media would be free to tell the truth. One newspaper took it to heart and ran a headline that said, "Suharto is an idiot!" The minister of justice promptly ordered the cops to arrest the editor in chief. They tried him, found him guilty, and sentenced him to 20 years and three months in jail. The three months were for sedition, and the 20 years were for revealing state secrets.

If the cloak-and-dagger-ish passing off of information by Aragoncillo to Erap and his merry men, current or ex, really signifies anything, it is merely the ridiculous pass we've reached where the opposition is now reduced to depending on a spy in the US to get wind of cannon fodder against GMA that can easily and less expensively be gotten from local sources. You don't even need to pay off spies in the AFP, you just have to attend *kapihans*. I knew about the "withdrawal of support" from GMA last February, a full day in advance, as, I would learn later, deflating my ego, did a whole tribe of journalists. There are no secrets in this country.

Certainly, there's nothing secret about Erap's desire and efforts to unseat GMA. He's never hidden it, or tried to, he has openly advertised it. In fact, all Gonzalez does by threatening Erap with sedition or rebellion is to call attention to GMA's own part in plotting to unseat Erap during his time. Something the Bayan Muna representatives brought out when they were being accused of plotting a coup against GMA. They had pictures to show GMA plotting with them to unseat Erap after the impeachment trial went bad. I suggest they make huge posters of it and paste it on walls if only to remind people of what a real plotter looks like.

Erap can at least argue that when GMA plotted against him, he was the president, having been voted to it by an overwhelming number of voters. Whether or not he had betrayed the public trust was debatable; the impeachment trial never reached a conclusion. By contrast, when he plotted against GMA, GMA was not the president. Certainly not after last year, when the "Hello Garci" tape surfaced, showing her to have plotted with Garci to steal the vote. The last thing GMA may pin Erap down on is sedition or rebellion. It reflects more on the accuser than on the accused.

Of course, by linking the campaign to oust GMA with espionage, Gonzalez and company hope to give it a furtive, shadowy and insidious quality. In fact, not only is there nothing secret about the campaign to oust GMA, there is nothing secret about the reason for it. The groups representing 65 percent of the population want GMA out because she stole the vote. The ultimate farce in the Aragoncillo case would be if he gets 20 years in jail for what he did. It would show that the US punishes people who commit crimes, even if the crime is simply revealing state secrets to people who already know about them. And alongside this, if GMA gets 10 years in Malacañang for what she did. It would show that this country rewards people who commit lapses in judgment, even if the lapse in judgment is calling up an election commissioner to make "*pagpataas sa inyo Ma'am.*"

It's comedy, but the kind that hurts when you laugh.

A new bargain for UN reform

WORLD VIEW

George Soros

THE UNITED NATIONS IS TORN APART BY internal tensions. No sooner was the controversy over the creation of a Human Rights Council satisfactorily resolved than a new battle erupted. The United States is pressing for administrative reforms and threatening to cut off funding if the reforms are not forthcoming.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan has submitted a reasonable reform plan, but a majority of UN member states, acting together as the so-called G-77, are balking, because they regard it as another step in reducing the authority of the General Assembly relative to the Security Council. In particular, they object to the plan's proposal to give increased powers and responsibilities to the secretary general, whose selection is effectively in the hands of the Security Council's five permanent members, which wield veto power.

Many UN members, believing that power within the UN has been shifting from the General Assembly, resist giving up what they regard as its last vestige: control over the budget through the work of the Assembly's Fifth Committee. In practice, the Fifth Committee has exercised the kind of micro-management over personnel and expenditure that ought to be exercised by the secretary general if the UN is to operate effectively and to have a staff which is up to the challenges facing the organization. This is the basis of America's insistence on administrative reforms.

There is an urgent need to find a way out of this impasse. Failure of the current proposal would mean an effective end to all efforts to reform the UN, with disastrous consequences for people across the world who depend on the aid provided by the UN Development Program, the security provided by the UN's numerous peacekeeping operations, or the myriad other services rendered by UN agencies. For example, failure of management reform would fuel demands by the US Congress to withhold America's contributions to the UN budget—a policy that would greatly undermine America's own interests, such as the planned expansion of the mission to stop genocide in Darfur.

The path to a satisfactory resolution is clear: give the General Assembly a greater role in the selection of the secretary general so that members would be delegating powers to an authority of their own choosing. This solution would not only permit the much-needed administrative reforms to be implemented; it would also bring clarity and transparency to a process that is in great need of improvement.

After all, the UN Charter provides that "the Secretary General shall be appointed by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council." The original concept was that the two bodies would reach a consensus on a candidate. In practice, however, the five permanent members now agree on a candidate, and their decision is rubber-stamped first by the Security Council and then by the General Assembly. Real discussions about a new secretary general are currently being conducted in secrecy among the permanent five, adding to the frustration of other UN members, including large powers that have been seeking without success to enlarge the Security Council.

To achieve the reforms of the budget process that it wants, the US will need to lead the way in persuading the other permanent members of the Council to give the General Assembly a greater role in the process. This might be done in several ways. The Security Council might agree to recommend several candidates from which the General Assembly would select one. Alternatively, the General Assembly might propose several candidates to the Security Council, from which the Council would choose one to refer back to the Assembly for approval.

Either way, the selection process would benefit from greater transparency. For example, the General Assembly should hold public hearings in which candidates are interviewed, thereby greatly enhancing the stature of the candidate who is eventually selected. Such proposals, if accepted, would help resolve the current dispute to everyone's satisfaction. Indeed, they could make the UN stronger than it has ever been.

Project Syndicate

George Soros is chair of the Open Society Institute and Soros Fund Management.

The 'Zuma rape case'

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AS I WRITE THIS, A JUDGE IN SOUTH AFRICA has started to read his verdict in an explosive rape case that has brought to the fore not just the guilt or innocence of a prominent politician, but tangled issues like HIV/AIDS, women's sexual behavior, as well as possible political motives in what his supporters see as a "conspiracy" against him.

The "Zuma rape case" is also interesting for us Filipinos because of parallels we can draw between this and the "Subic rape case," none more uncanny than that both alleged rapes took place around the same time, in November last year.

Jacob Zuma was deputy president of South Africa and of the ruling ANC party before his firing by President Thabo Mbeki around June last year, on charges of corruption. Last November, a newspaper reported that a woman had filed a complaint of rape against Zuma, and on Dec. 6, formal charges were filed against the politician. The trial started in February.

The case has pitted supporters of Zuma, described by South African media as a "veteran anti-apartheid" fighter who commands huge support mainly because of his "down-to-earth leadership" that has endeared him to the masses, against women's rights groups and AIDS advocacy groups who have thrown their support behind "Khwenzi," as her supporters call her, a 31-year-old woman who is living with HIV and is an AIDS activist, who says her family had been close to Zuma and that she in fact called him "uncle."

* * *

BOTH Zuma and Khwenzi agree on the basic facts of the case: Last Nov. 2, while she was visiting Zuma in his home, they had engaged in sex. But while Zuma says the sex was consensual, Khwenzi says she was raped, and that she neither shouted nor fled the scene because she "froze," a claim that was bolstered by a psychologist.

Expectedly, the defense panel sought to tear the woman's testimony to shreds, along with her reputation. They brought up the woman's sexual history, bringing in men who painted on the stand a portrait of the accuser as loose and promiscuous. They even noted that she was wearing a "kaza," an attire similar to a *malong* that South African women commonly wear to bed, on the night of the alleged rape and described it as "attire (that) amounted to a big signal that she wanted sex."

On the witness stand, the 64-year-old Zuma testified that the woman entered his room (she alleges that he entered the guest room where she was staying) and that he had unprotected sex with her because according to Zulu tradition, "it is a grave affront to reject a woman who wants to have sex." The politician also raised the hackles of AIDS activists when he said that he had showered after having sex with Khwenzi as a way of protecting himself against an HIV infection.

* * *

THE ACCUSER in the Zuma rape case, like "Nicole" in the Subic rape case, hardly fits the stereotype of a rape survivor. Media reports described her as "well-spoken with a strong personality." She has also testified that she is a lesbian. Also, being an AIDS activist and being HIV positive herself, she said she knew better than to have sex with someone without using a condom.

Like Zuma, Khwenzi's late father had strong credentials as an anti-apartheid fighter, with his entire family exiled to Zimbabwe where he died. Khwenzi and her mother returned to South Africa in 1990, and graduated from the University of Natal. She found out that she was HIV positive some time between 1996 and 1998. She also testified that she had been raped at least twice before, testimony that South African women's groups seized on to highlight the unusually high incidence of rape in their country, as well as the very high incidence of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, where some estimate that one in four adults is HIV positive.

But what's really remarkable—or scandalous, depending on one's viewpoint—about the proceedings, has been the behavior of Zuma's supporters, which has been used to indicate the public's attitude toward rape victims and women's rights in general.

During the trial, thousands of Zuma's supporters, many of them women, gathered around the courthouse wearing T-shirts with Zuma's face declaring him a "100 percent Zulu boy." They also burned photos of Khwenzi, while chanting "Burn the bitch!" Several prominent artists and groups also took part in a concert to raise funds for the "Friends of Jacob Zuma Trust Fund," and one group has been distributing a song calling for Zuma's freedom.

* * *

IN MANY ways, Khwenzi is much luckier than "Nicole," not least because the trial of her alleged rapist is about to end.

Regardless of the outcome, news reports said that Khwenzi is leaving for exile abroad once again, accompanied by her mother, because police could not guarantee her safety. A friend of hers has described her mother as "afraid, tired and depressed," and said that Khwenzi is "basically, carrying this thing alone." Perhaps in this regard, "Nicole" is luckier as she continues to enjoy her family's support as well as that of women's groups.

But what does this say of society—South African or Philippine—that a rape victim should be punished by exile or ignominy regardless of whether her rapist or rapists are found guilty or not? The "Zuma rape case" also provides stark evidence of what a woman who goes public with her charges of rape faces. It is never easy nor is she really safe. But it does take a tremendous amount of courage and ferocity to persist even when everybody tells you to "move on," including your own government.

No matter how the "Zuma rape case" is decided, or how the "Subic rape case" proceeds despite the many obstacles thrown in its path by our own Department of Justice, Khwenzi and "Nicole" deserve our sympathy and our support.

New kid on the block?

COMMENTARY

Diana Jean V. Moraleda,
Institute on Church and Social Issues

SOMETHING NEW HAS BEEN COOKING IN THE population and development kitchen. On Feb. 28, 2006, the Institute for Reproductive Health of Georgetown University and its Philippine counterpart launched the Two-day Method at the Asian Institute of Management Conference Center. The Two-day Method is a natural family planning (NFP) method that helps the woman determine her fertile and infertile periods.

The procedure is quite simple: a woman checks every day for the presence of cervical secretions. If a woman notices any secretions today or yesterday, she considers herself fertile today and avoids intercourse today. More simply put, if a woman had two consecutive days without secretions, her probability of becoming pregnant is very low, thus the name Two-day.

Fertility awareness-based methods of family planning have been available for many years but never had something like this sounded so easy to do. The Two-day Method does not require the woman to use a thermometer like the Basal Body Temperature Method, or charts like the Billings Ovulation Method, or even beads like the Standard Days Method. What's more, women with menstrual cycles of any length can use the method.

The Two-day Method has the same advantages as other natural family planning methods. There are no health related side effects associated with its use, it can be used to avoid or achieve pregnancy, it has no cost and promotes male partner involvement in family planning, among others.

It almost sounds as easy as popping a pill provided, however, that the woman has normal cervical secretions, meaning she is not currently taking medications (e.g. the pill) that cause abnormal secretions, that she is actually willing to check for secretions, and that the couple can avoid intercourse for several consecutive days each cycle.

And there lies the rub. Through experience, community-based NFP service providers sense that people do get turned-off by having to abstain for up to 12 consecutive days. Many women express concern that their husbands have the upper hand when deciding to have intercourse. There are cases where wives are physically abused when they do not submit to the wishes of drunken husbands. For as long as such situations persist, no method which requires the husband's cooperation is practical.

However, some couples who are more open to use NFP do attest that it really enhances self-discipline, mutual respect, cooperation, communication and shared responsibility. One coping mechanism, for example, is for the wife to initiate lovemaking if she knows she is infertile so that it is easier for the couple to abstain from sex when she becomes fertile. This way, NFP also has the ability to empower women. More and more, wives are becoming partners in making decisions not only for the couple but also for the whole family.

NFP can be very useful in meeting national goals as well. The Philippines aims to lower its annual population growth rate of 2.11 percent for the period 2000 to 2005 to 1.9 percent in 2010. This would mean that the current contraceptive prevalence rate of 49 percent should increase up to 53 percent in the next five years. For 35 years, the US Agency for International Aid (USAID) had been consistently donating contraceptives in the Philippines. However, due to their withdrawal of support for the Family Planning Program's contraceptive procurement, it will nearly be impossible for the government to provide free contraceptives to the people, given the tight national budget. NFP is another means to help the government meet its targets.

Parish and community-based NFP programs are ongoing in communities within Payatas, Tondo, Ipil, Zamboanga and Imus, Cavite, among others. These programs are educating thousands especially the poor, who make up most of the 51.1 percent of married women who do not use any family planning method. Teaching NFP works only if it is taught directly to communities where couples, especially the mothers, can take one to two hours off their daily tasks and participate in training held within the neighborhood and if parish and community volunteers take time to follow up until the participants become autonomous users, that is, they have the ability to practice the method correctly.

Despite the scientifically proven effectiveness of modern natural family planning methods, not more than 15.1 percent of married Filipino women know about these. Worse, only 0.3 percent actually practice modern NFP. These figures show that not only is there a wide ignorance of modern NFP methods, there is also a prevalent opinion that NFP is not as convenient and effective, which accounts for the low percentage of NFP use among those who already know.

The challenge, therefore, is to involve as many parishes and communities as possible in promoting NFP by setting-up programs of their own. Institutions like Pro-life Philippines, Institute for Reproductive Health-Philippines and Institute on Church and Social Issues can help by providing technical assistance to start-up groups.

Alongside efforts to promote the use of existing NFP methods, there are also moves to disprove the myth that NFP is ineffective and to increase NFP's acceptability.

The Two-day Method may be the new kid on the NFP block but it promises to be more appealing to the public. Its efficacy rate of 96.5 percent is comparable to other natural and unnatural family planning methods. Of the 450 women who participated in the efficacy study conducted in five different sites in Guatemala, Peru and the Philippines, 96.1 percent gave positive comments. Almost 94 percent of participants thought that their partner liked the method. It might not take long before the Two-day Method is also taught in urban and rural poor communities.

Each natural family planning method has its strengths and weaknesses and it is up to the couples to decide which fits their needs. The Two-day Method succeeds in providing another option for couples who seek simple, accurate and inexpensive ways to plan their families. It undeniably is a welcome addition to the menu of the family planning cafeteria.

There's something about Makati

YOUNG BLOOD

Nini Hernandez

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

AFTER SPENDING THE TAIL END OF THE WEEKEND schmoozing at a friend's house party in Makati, I ended up wondering what I was doing in the city. Makati is a nice place to hang out on weekends, but it's more of a fantasy city to me. It's a place where fantasies come to life and prices skyrocket. It's where you find stores selling clothes for P15,000, where beer costs P120 and where everybody is judged by what (or who) they are wearing.

But since I was already there, I thought I'd check out the local "scene." It was, of course, my innate inability to drink loads of alcoholic beverage that's responsible for my sobriety and led me to lament such a wonderful day. I had found a table just outside Starbucks and sat down with a glass of sweetened iced tea, and that's where I started scribbling some observations.

Observation No. 1: What was once a yuppie (young urban professional) hangout has turned into a meat market overnight. No, it's not the kind where you buy pork for grandma's *adobo*, we're talking about human meat peddled by pimps. Café Havana was once known as an artiste's place, but now locals tend to avoid it. There are still some yuppies who haven't given up on hanging out at Greenbelt, but you are likely to see them holed up at Starbucks or at Seattle's Best. Only a few dare to go near Café Havana or Café Breton least they be likened to "sirens" trying to pick up some naïve foreign guys (according to a friend), who think that's all that the Philippines has to offer. It's a sad reality we all have to face.

The streets of Makati are full of traffic enforcers dressed in yellow shirts. Everything runs smoothly. Buses, jeepneys and other public utility vehicles follow traffic rules to the letter. But come night time, Makati transforms itself from a business district to another city catering to a different kind of business: monkey business.

As I continue to watch people at Greenbelt, I can count at least 20 "working girls" and a handful of "ladyboys" dressed to the nines and hoping to snag that expat. As I sit there on my observation chair, a big, fat, balding, white guy passes by with three "working girls" in tow. The girls look like they are barely of legal age.

And the ladyboys? Wow! They are prettier than most girls. Clad in the skimpiest of outfits, they are always there any day of the week, I am told, come rain or come shine, waiting for someone to come up to them and "negotiate."

I've gone people-watching there before with my American friend, Greg, and he observed the same things. Is this how we're trying to promote tourism? Are we trying to tell the world how desperation can make us "friendlier"? I sincerely hope not. For all of their pretensions about imposing discipline, Makati's officials seem unable to break up this trade.

Observation No. 2: On a more personal note, I can't help but wonder what am I doing here. I'm not the Makati kind of girl. I am from a middle-class family, where cheap is in, where you're the toast of the crowd when you've made a good purchase for half the price.

In many previous encounters that I had with them, I have heard some members of the Makati crowd talk like money grew from trees. They'd talk about how tired they were after shopping the whole day and "maxing" out their credit cards. I would just keep quiet, because I can't relate with them since I only go shopping like twice a year (sometimes just once a year)—for my birthday and for Christmas. Such talk doesn't shock me anymore, but I don't think there's any sure-fire way to get used to it. I still get perplexed every now and then.

When I complain about the higher cost of commuting to office, they talk about booking their next flight to LaLa land. The division in the economic strata is evident. This is a country where the rich get richer, the poor get poorer and the middle class stays in the middle—unless they win the lottery.

I have friends who are well-off. Some are arrogant, but some have their feet firmly planted on the ground. Sometimes I envy their capacity to enjoy life, but more often than not, I'm happy where I am because I can't think of any place where it might be better to be. I get to see the best and the worst of both worlds.

I still get giddy when I purchase something at a really big discount. I haggle hard to get my money's worth. The big players have the time of their lives when they purchase a blouse for "only" P1,000. For them, that is a steal. For me, that is a week's allowance or if I had that much money to shop that would buy me a new wardrobe.

They love to hang out at Hard Rock, I'm content to go to 70's Bistro and other pseudo underground bars where I can be known as me and not for the brand of clothes I wear. I have the choice of hanging out with them or not, but I continue to do so because I have learned to see through our differences. There are some things in life that I cannot reach for or see without them and vice versa. If I want to have a better understanding of the world, it's best that I expose myself to things that would have otherwise been out of my reach.

As I stood up to go home, I bumped into one of my rich acquaintances. The moment she saw me, she started complaining again—this time about how hard it was to get parking space and how late she was for an appointment because her driver didn't show up, blah blah blah. It made me feel that walking the long stretch of Ayala Avenue until I got to the passenger loading dock for buses was the better deal.

To be happy, you have to take things with a grain of salt. No matter, how big or small your paycheck, you can enjoy life. Living within your means isn't a bad thing.

Nini Hernandez, 25, is a senior communications officer at Philexport.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

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Why ethanol first, when we already are overflowing with cocodiesel?

WITH THE PRICE OF CRUDE OIL AT historic highs, biofuels are once again hogging the news. But what's amazing is that all the talk is about ethanol—in a country that is the world's largest exporter of coconut oil and the leading producer of coconut methyl ester (CME), or cocodiesel.

True, ethanol is the rage in Brazil and the United States, but I'm willing to bet that if these countries had plenty of coconuts, they would go all-out for cocodiesel. True, there's plenty of sugarcane in the Philippines, but nowhere near the volume of coconuts. Besides, the world price of sugar is on the rise, and demand far outstrips supply. Above all, ethanol production is still in its initial stages, whereas CME is now sold locally and in overseas markets—its virtues as an excellent biofuel proven by numerous tests.

A recent newspaper column on ethanol asked, "But Where Can We Find Flex Fuel Cars?" Hello! Our very own cocodiesel can be used without the need for engine modifications. (Noting the country's fixation on ethanol, a visiting fuel efficiency expert recently remarked, "If you want to do something immediately, you have to use that which is immediately available and proven, and can be distributed within the existing distribution system for fuels and additives without requiring engine modifications. CME fits these requirements.")

By the way, our NGO—whose motto is "Always List Your Coconut!"—manages a coco coir processing enterprise and operates a 150HP decorticating machine using diesel blended with 1-percent CME. Our plant is now smoke- and pollution-free; the diesel engine runs more efficiently (resulting in fuel savings), and, delightfully, the whole place smells like a McDonald's!

—**PERLA LIMBAGA MANAPOL,**
president,
Sustainable Rural Enterprise,
Banga and Ibajay, Aklan,
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
LETTERS

Is government really intent on improving school system?

THE RESIGNATION OF EDUCATION Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz was forthcoming and expected. It was a principled move of a principled man who tried so hard to fight corruption. I remember Luz was a resource speaker in one of the training courses I attended last summer. In his talk, he expressed his frustrations with the government's halfhearted support for public education.

If the Department of Education or the Arroyo administration really wants to improve the country's educational system, especially the teaching of English, it should reevaluate its employees' performance and send English, Math and Science teachers who cannot speak correct English to intensive training seminars. It should also dismiss inefficient principals, supervisors and directors who know nothing but act like the lapdogs of politicians.

I was a public school teacher. I resigned because I could not suffer the inefficiency of my superiors. I'm proud of Undersecretary Luz. For a long time, I suspected him to be a really good man like former Education Secretary Florencio Abad. For now, DepEd is not a place for them. It is for the vermins.

—**OBIE NOR B. MADLANG,**
University Of Luzon, Dagupan City

Cynical about MMDA's 'Pink Cloth' campaign

I BELIEVE THAT FILIPINOS ARE BASICally a law-abiding people, but *pag makakalusot ay lulusot* (will give the law the slip if they could). Motorists conscientiously follow the traffic regulations inside Subic Bay and Clark Field because they know they will immediately get a ticket for any traffic violation. So I have come to the conclusion that the only way to instill driver discipline and ease the flow of traffic along Edsa or anywhere else is to give motorists a traffic violation ticket for each and every traffic violation they commit anywhere, anytime.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority is coming up with its "Pink Cloth" campaign (PDI, 4/17/06) to limit the time spent by buses at bus stops—a very good plan, if implemented properly. I have lost count of the many campaigns that the MMDA has initiated for that purpose, especially along Edsa.

One of the first campaigns was a sign at bus stops instructing each bus driver to stop for only a few seconds (was it 15?) to pick up passengers. I guess it worked during the first week or so—then *balik sa dating ugali* (BSDU or back to the old practice).

BSDU is about 15 to 20 enforcers blowing whistles and waving (some with batons) the buses to move on, while the "lead bus"—still about 20 meters from the bus stop—inches along ever so slowly as if eternity can wait, forcing buses behind to overtake but only to stop in front of or alongside the lead bus to pick up passengers; then another bus does the same; thus with two other buses, effectively blocking three lanes. The traffic enforcers? They keep on blowing whistles and waving the buses to move on, but they never issue a traffic violation ticket to a bus driver who don't move on.

This "Pink Cloth" campaign? I'll give it also a week, then BSDU. Because MMDA's campaigns have all been *ningas cogon* so far, I doubt if the MMDA is really serious with its programs, and I am inclined to suspect that its operatives are on the take.

If the MMDA will issue traffic violation tickets to all violators, it will only need two enforcers per bus stop: one to wave drivers to move on and the other to issue a ticket to the drivers who do not move on as instructed. At the beginning, it may need two "ticket issuers" for a total of three enforcers.

The other enforcers who will no longer be needed at Edsa should be assigned to inter shifts or other intersections to ensure that traffic enforcers will be around 24/7 to issue traffic violation tickets at all intersections.

—**CARMELO S. DOROTHEO,**
4548 Clover Rd.,
Sun Valley, Parañaque City

Symbol of soldiery

I HAD A CHANCE TO WORK with the late Army Staff Sgt. Antonio Batomalaque (a member of the Philippine peacekeeping force who was killed in a firefight in Haiti last year) in a field assignment years ago. He was a good soldier and family man, and he had the respect of his co-workers and superiors.

The honor that will be conferred on him on May 29—the United Nations' Dag Hammarskjold Medal—pays tribute not only to him but also to the Filipino soldiers who are risking their lives as peacekeepers, not only in their homeland but also in other war-torn areas of the world. Batomalaque was also honored by the United States with the Soldier's Medal, the highest award for non-wartime valor, for his heroism and devotion to duty.

Soldiers prove their mettle and make the ultimate sacrifice in the face of challenges. Batomalaque was such an example of a brave soldier. It is very hard for those who came to know him up close, especially for his family, to accept his early demise. His buddies in the military truly miss him. But, somehow, the sense of pain and loss is eased because Batomalaque stood as a symbol of Filipino soldiery.

—**1LT. ROY B. VILLANUEVA, PA,**
Upper Calarian, Zamboanga City

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Commuters wait for their ride at an MRT station.

Taking the MRT getting to be more stressful

DO OUR HIGH OFFICIALS KNOW HOW bad Metro Rail Transit's service is? Do they know how stressful it is to ride an MRT train, especially in the morning, at the North station? And do they know why most of the "entrance booths" (turnstiles, where you insert the ticket) are left idle even during rush hours?

Also, the MRT management should provide a way for commuters to signal the train driver every time he forgets to switch on the air conditioning. (Not a few times I have experienced getting into an MRT coach with its air conditioning off from the North station to the Shaw station.) And this is not the only reason I call the MRT the "Hell Train."

Unfortunately, I have no choice but to ride the MRT every day to and from the office.

You're already stressed from work, you get more stressed because you have to fall into a very long line to get a train ticket. And by the way, why does MRT's supply of stored value tickets always run short?

—**XENIEL SITJAR,**
xeniel.sitjar@gmail.com

One sure thing: people want GMA out

THERE ARE MANY THINGS TO LOVE about Conrado de Quiros' columns. He speaks like the lone voice of reason in the sickening darkness. His writings are like sparks of logic lighting the cloudy skies above an evil regime.

He has suggested that a snap presidential election could be "it." By "it," I mean the alternative to Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. But:

1. How to do it when it is not in the 1987 Constitution?

2. It can only be done if GMA resigns which is a remote possibility.

3. Elections, as we have seen in 2004, can be manipulated because the Commission on Elections is not exactly a paragon of incorruptibility. So, how can we solve this crisis of leadership if we will be using the same process that brought us to the present political crisis?

4. I don't agree with the idea of another Edsa Revolt. People Power has become tiresome. Besides, people power revolts have turned out to be charades, circus acts. A snap election is out of the question. A constitutional election is still light-years away.

The only sure thing there is—people want GMA out. That's as clear as day.

My opinion is this: Those who want GMA out should do it swiftly and decisively. They must arrest this usurper and her illegal occupants, then try them for the crimes they have committed against the people. If this is not possible, send them into exile. Or confine them in a remote island in the Babuyan.

The coup last February, if ever there was one, which I doubt failed because the people behind it lost the political will to push it to its logical conclusion. They waited for AFP Chief Gen. Generoso Senga et al. to defect when it was clear that these people are enemies.

—**ABDULRAHMAN ISMAIL,**
abdulrahmanismail@lycos.com

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
TV GUIDE
Tuesday, May 9, 2006

Kaya nila... Ikaw kaya, kaya mo?
Ultimate
Guinness World Records
Tuesday 8:30 PM
ABC
Iba Tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5				National Geographic	Volleyball League				Sentro	Mumbai Thrillers	TNA Impact		Pinoy Gumaca		Big News	Next Action Star		ALI	
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Pinoy Big Brother	Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Panday	Wonderful Life	Nagmamahal, Kapamilya			Insider
AXN		Lost (Season II)		House		Sports Disaster		The 4400		Fear Factor (Season III)		The Amazing Race (Season IX)		Alias (Season IV)		CSI: NY (Season 2)		Rescue Me	
Cartoon Network	Police Academy	Richie Rich	Tom & Jerry Show	Baby Looney Tunes	Hi Hi Puffy AmiYumi	Codename Kids Next Door	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	The Simpsons		Power Rangers Wild Force	PokeMon	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		The Simpsons		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		T-Bird At Ako				Oras Oras Araw Araw		[illegible]				Super B				Diskarte			
Cinemax	Mr. Deeds Goes To Town (2:30 PM)				The Prosecutors			An Officer And A Gentleman				Hudson Hawk			Dead Funnies [illegible]			Commandments (11:05PM)	
CNN		Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International	World Sport	World News Asia		World News	World Sport	World News Asia	World News Asia	Your World Today			
Crime/Suspense		Dominick Dunne's Power, Privilege & Justice		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Body Of Evidence	Law & Order		Law & Order: Special Victims Unit		Surface		Prison Break		Law & Order: Criminal Intent	
Discovery Channel		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Ride		Walking with Dinosaurs		Blueprint For Disaster		Wild Discovery		Hour Asia		We Built This City		Blueprint For Disaster		Crime Stories	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Unstalkative Disney	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean: The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Suite Life Of Zack And Cody	Phil Of The Future	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Rangers	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '04 [illegible] Pool NY USA		Pool Snooker [illegible] '03 Holland		Asian X Games '05 Presented by Kia		Watersports [illegible]		Atlantic Coast Conf. Basketball: Maryland Vs Duke				Sportscenter Asia	Pool Snooker Premier Snooker League 03				Sportscenter Asia
ETC	Insider Weekend	Project Runway		Change of Heart	Eliminidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		One Tree Hill 3		The O.C. 3		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	The Tonight Show With Jay Leno	
ETC 2nd Avenue		Starting Over		The Maury Povich Show		The Jerry Springer Show		Dr Phil		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition	The Ellen Show		Wheel Of Fortune	Jeopardy	Blowout 2		NBC Nightly News	The Inside Edition
EWTN	Super Saints	Chaplet Of Mercy Angelus	ABCatholic	Angel Farm	Rosary With Mother Angelica	EWTN Gallery	Mirror Of The Soul	Lord, I Have Mercy	Behold the Man, Spirituality for Men	The Journey Home Encore		Daily Mass Live		Holy Land Rosary/Angelus	The Good Circle The Natural Law	Chaplet Of Divine Mercy	Octavia Dios	Web Of Faith	
Fox News		Hannity & Colmes		On The Record With Greta Van Susteren		The O'Reilly Factor		Your World With Neil Cavuto		Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Agawin Mo Man Ang Lahat	Now and Forever (3:15 PM)	Snow White Sweet Love		Saiyuki	Dragonball Z	Gokusen	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Love Of The Condor Heroes		Jewel In The Palace		Bubay Mo Ela 101			Saksi
Hallmark Channel		McLeod's Daughters IV						Bewitched	The Nanny	Family Law III				Judging Amy					Judging Amy (11:45PM)
HBO		The Winning Season (3:15 PM)				Breakin' All The Rules			A Smile Like Yours			Deadwood 20: Childish Things		Deadwood 31: [illegible] And Ciphers	When Trumpets Fade (9:45 PM)			Manhattan Murder Mystery (11:15PM)	
Hero TV	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter	Soul Hunters	Lost Universe	Beyblade G-Revolution	Yu-Gi-Oh GX	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh Duel Monsters	Yakitate! Japan	Mr Ajikko	D.I.C.E	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Sorcerer Hunter
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Barbie On The Go	IBC Express Balita	[illegible] Kong Jeopardy		Global Family Songs		ME TV		PTA: Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Songs	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show With David Letterman		Raw				The Batman	Just For Laughs (Gags)	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Arrested Development	The Late Show With David Letterman		The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	Comedy Central Presents	South Park	The Man Show
Lifestyle Network	Secret Gardens	30 Minute Meals	Wolfgang Puck	Sweet Dreams	The Fix	Mission Organization	Carol Duvall	Emeril Live		Passion For Dessert	E! News Weekend		Look For Less	Martha		Napa Style	[illegible] Designer Living	Guess Who's Coming To Decorate	
MTV Philippines		Pimp My Ride		Handpicked: Pups	Pop Inc.		MTV Hits (with SMS)			Get Spotted	Bing	Essential Red Hot Chili Peppers		TRL		Pimp My Ride		Sessions. Pupil	Jams
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYX Versions	MYX Finals	Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten		Top Of The Pops	Radio MYX	MYX News	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Wildlife Diary	Nat'l Geographic Specials: [illegible] of Elephants		Marine Machines: Extreme Depth		Who's Afraid Of Designer Babies?	Wildlife Diary	About Asia: [illegible] Tsunami	About Asia: Nulla [illegible] The Good Snake	WOW! The Universe [illegible]		About Asia: [illegible] Tsunami	About Asia: Nulla [illegible] The Good Snake	Best of the Week: After Asteroids		Air Crash Investigation: Kid in the Cockpit		Hunter Hunted: Down Under	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Asia	[illegible]	Teledyaryo W/ [illegible] & Angelique Lazo		[illegible] ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition				[illegible] With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Of Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			Juan Tamad Junior				[illegible]				[illegible]				[illegible]				Blondie 2
Qtv	[illegible]		Zenkix	Kaleido Star	MMS (My Music Station)		Mona		Magic Ring	Irena	Noel	Project 11	Family Zoo		News On Q	[illegible]		Irena	Over The Green Fields
RPN 9						Global Window	RPN Aksyon News	Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Boarding House: North Shore		Australia's Next Top Model		Paradise Hotel		Newswatch Now	Tuesday Night Thrill		
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		Quantum Global		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports									IBF [illegible] Finals			2006 NBA Playoffs Conf. Semis					Solar Sports Desk	Table Tennis World Team Champs	
Sports Plus				This Is The PGA Tour		Ray Ban [illegible] Poker Challenge				[illegible] Tunervision 10	Rookie Manual	Ultimate Fighting Championship					NBA Game: [illegible] Game 1		
Star Movies				Hostile Hostage (4:05 PM)			Mad Love (5:45 PM)				Flubber (7:25 PM)			Uptown Girls			Ladder 49 (10:35 PM)		
Star World	Frasier	The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Ed		The Simpsons	Mermaids In The [illegible]	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	Charmed		The O.C.		North Shore		Seinfeld	Charmed
Studio 23	Bewitched	Naruto				Batman Beyond	Monkey Typhoon	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	Andromeda		Smallville (8:20 PM)	Gilmore Girls (9:10 PM)		News Central	Oprah		Reality World

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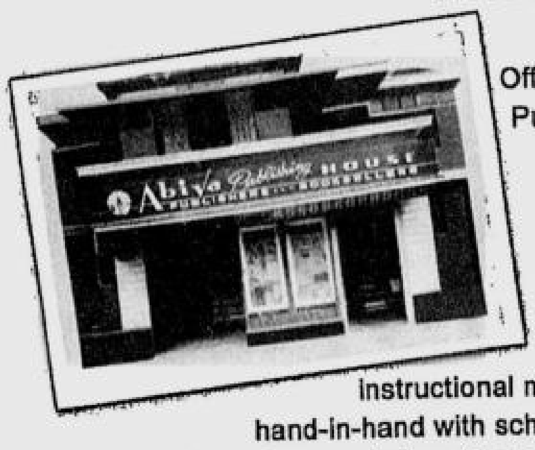

Officially established in May 1936, Abiva Publishing House, Inc. is the oldest and most enduring textbook publisher and bookseller in the Philippines. It pioneered in publishing textbooks in all grade levels and learning areas, supplementary books, references, and multimedia instructional materials. Abiva is also the first to work hand-in-hand with schools to organize and conduct trainings and seminar-workshops for teachers' continuing professional growth.

Prime Movers

Filipino educators Luis Ramos Abiva, Sr. and Asuncion Quiray Abiva founded Abiva Publishing House, then known as Abiva Press, in order to help teachers and junior patrolmen pass and achieve high scores in civil service examinations.

The first Abiva office was located in Evangelista St., Quiapo, Manila. From a one-room office, the small printing press transferred to a bigger office in Misericordia St. (later T. Mapua) in 1939 to accommodate educators' clamor for more affordable and relevant educational materials.

Core Values

In 1943, Asuncion Abiva took the helm of the company after the sudden death of her husband. Amidst the challenges of singly raising a young family in the face of World War II, she continued her husband's vision of publishing excellent educational materials. To succeed, she developed the core values of fear of God, integrity, excellence, commitment, productivity, customer satisfaction, and teamwork.

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Abiva Publishing House ventured in publishing textbooks for elementary and high school that eventually became phenomenal bestsellers. Among these are *A World United (1954); Wikang Sarili (1960); Hiyas (1967); Prose and Poetry (1972); Enriching Oral Communication Skills (1989); Basic Speech for You and Me (1990); Science, Health, and Environment (1997);* and *Soaring High with Reading (1997).*

Home of SRA in the Philippines

In 1965, Abiva became the exclusive distributor of the Science Research Associates (SRA) Reading Laboratory kits. As Abiva's proactive response in enforcing the Department of Education's policy of "Every Child a Reader," SRA is among the most trusted learning programs worldwide because they provide individualized and multilevel development of reading and other competencies.

Serving the Whole Nation

True to its service-oriented principle, Abiva established accessible branches in Metro Manila, Visayas, and Mindanao to serve the educational needs of public and private schools nationwide.

Its main office is located in G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City with branches in Cebu and Davao.

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On its 70th year, Abiva launches 8 new books that are guaranteed to achieve effective results in enhancing learners' competencies—*Abiva Kinder Series; Productive Living, updated version, 4-6; Umunlad sa Paggawa 4-6; Speech K-6; Sing, Sketch, Stretch 1-6; Pathways: An Integrated Approach I-IV; Hiyas ng Diwa I-IV;* and *Filipino Writings in Contextual Setting.*

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Grenade attack hurts 2 militant leaders

COTABATO CITY—TWO LEADERS OF MILITANT GROUPS are in critical condition following a grenade attack on their office in Kidapawan City on Sunday night.

Severely wounded were Jobani Tacadao, spokesperson of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) in North Cotabato, and Roderick Abalde, a member of the provincial secretariat of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

Supt. Danny Reyes, Kidapawan police chief, said the victims were about to leave the office on a motorcycle at about 9 p.m. when two men on another motorcycle arrived.

Tacadao said one of the two men pulled what he described as an MK-72 fragmentation grenade and threw it into the office.

Militant groups believed the attack was the work of Army intelligence agents with whom Tacadao and Abalde had an argument with during the Labor Day rally on May 1 in Kidapawan.

Tacadao and Abalde had confiscated the digital camera of an Army agent who, they said, penetrated their ranks at the rally site.

Del Fano, chair of Anakpawis and member of the KMU secretariat in the province, said the grenade attack was part of government efforts to silence the militant groups.

Bayan, KMU and Anakpawis are among the groups calling for the ouster of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

"This incident clearly shows how the Arroyo administration is desperate in putting pressure on groups and individuals critical to them and whom they consider as their enemy," said Frankie del Rosario, spokesperson of Bayan-Cotabato.

Michael Dumamba, spokesperson of the Liga ng Kabataan Moro, said what happened was meant to systematically threaten and stop groups advancing changes in the government and those that expose the "deteriorating leadership" of Ms Arroyo.

Dumamba said they expected more attacks on their ranks.

Zaynab Ampatuan, national deputy secretary general of party-list group Suara Bangsamoro, said the attack here was not an isolated incident.

"There's a crackdown on progressive groups and a number of militant leaders already shed their blood under the repressive Arroyo administration," she said. *Edwin Fernandez, Jeofrey Maitem and Jeffrey Tupas, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

House body seeks test of mine site safety

BULAN, SORSOGON—THE HOUSE committee on environment will request the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to temporarily lift a cease-and-desist order (CDO) imposed on Lafayette Philippines Inc., which operates the Rapu-Rapu mining in Albay, the committee's vice chair said.

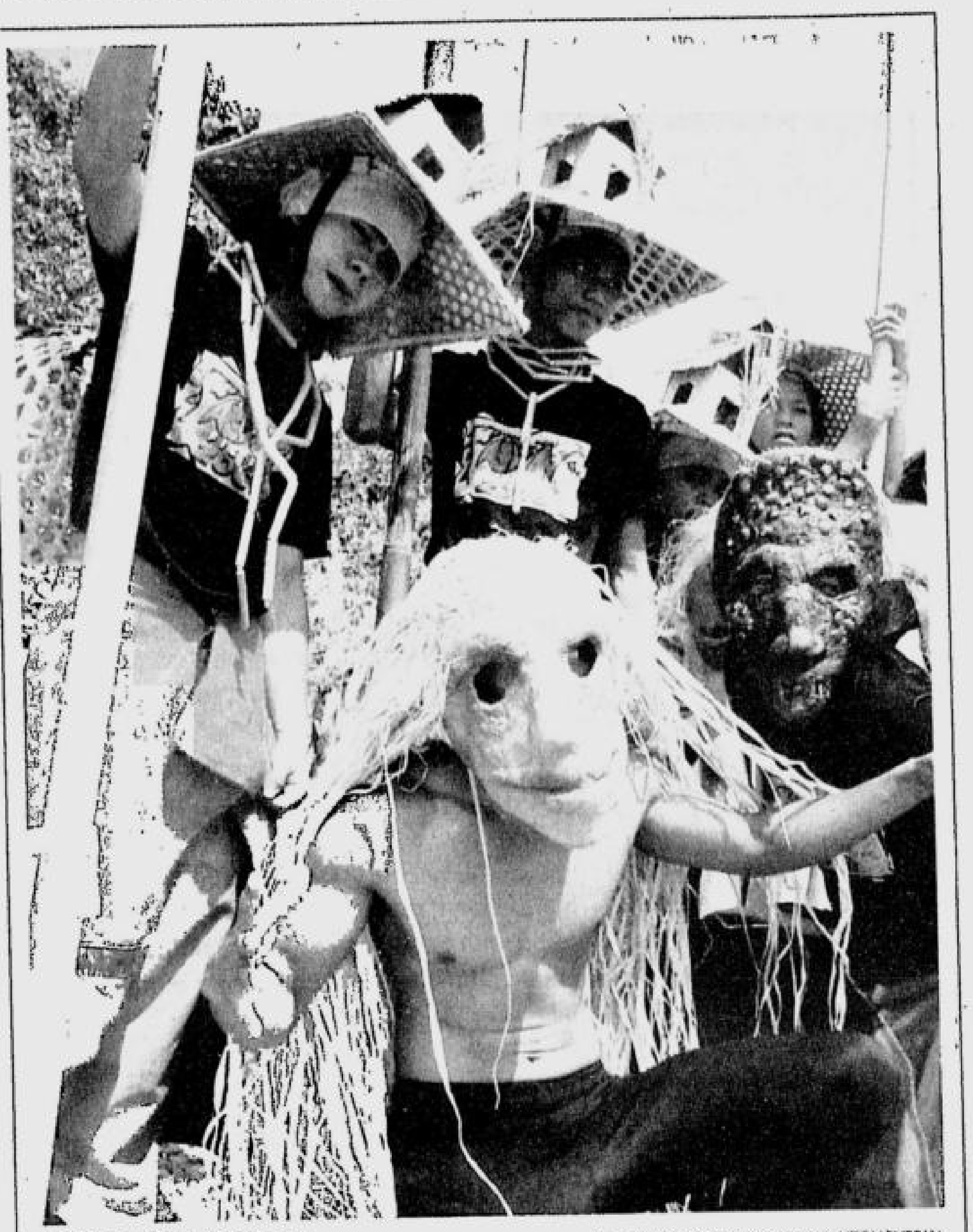
Rep. Jose Solis (second district, Sorsogon), however, refused to call it temporary lifting. He said he would ask Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes to allow the commissioning of Lafayette's plant to check if it had already complied with conditions set by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"As far as the committee is concerned, we would like to test the system to know if indeed it has already complied with the standards imposed by the DENR," Solis said.

During the test, colored water will be used to see if there would be leaks and to see where the effluents go, he said.

He clarified that the commissioning did not mean that Lafayette would already be allowed to operate.

"If the system proves safe in all aspects ... then there is no reason why we should oppose its resumption," he added. *Bobby Labalan, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*



VILLAMOR VISAYA/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

FIESTA CREATURES
Boys in masks and body paints whoop it up as they join the Isabela Day celebration's grand opening on May 7 in Ilagan, Isabela.

Keep searching, kin of seamen urge S. Africa

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—RESCUERS HAVE SUSPENDED the search for 26 seamen, five of them from Negros Occidental, who have gone missing after a Greek bulk carrier sank off Port Elizabeth in South Africa last week.

Negros Occidental Rep. Ignacio Arroyo Jr. said officials of the Philippine Embassy in South Africa informed him on Sunday that the rescue operations for the missing crew members of The Alexandros T had been suspended.

But he said he was also told that the mission would resume once there was information on the fate of those missing.

Arroyo said he was still trying to make representations to see if the search could be continued.

But he said he was told that the South Africans did not believe that the missing could last long in the waters because the cold would cause them to suffer from hypothermia.

Bad weather

Eric Aquino, Department of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that the rescue operation was suspended due to bad weather.

But he said the search would resume once the weather improved.

The Alexandros T was sailing from Brazil to China to transport iron ore last Wednesday when it sank some 300 nautical miles off the eastern port city of Port Elizabeth.

Eighteen Filipino crewmen were missing. Of the number, five were from Negros Occidental.

They were Jose Ashley Vasquez, 33, Paulie Navarete and Warren Cabia, 31, all of Hinigaran town; and Louie Deriada and Ruson Cabugwason, both of La Carlota City.

The families of the missing Negrenses are calling on the Philippine government to make strong representations with the South African government to continue and intensify the search for their loved ones.

Heroes

"Our officials have called our Overseas Filipino Workers the new heroes of our country and the OFWs remit $10 billion annually through formal channels that fuels the country's economy," said Daylen Vasquez, sister of Jose Ashley Vasquez.

"They should not give up on the 18 missing Filipinos, they should do all they can to help find them," she added.

Daylen said her brother left a wife Fe, and an eight-year-old daughter, Ashley Fay.

She said Representative Arroyo called her on Sunday to inform her family of developments in the rescue mission.

"I asked him if President Gloria Arroyo was aware of the plight of my brother and the others who are still missing and he said she was," Daylen said.

Daylen said they were grateful that the Philippine Embassy in South Africa was doing what it could to monitor the situation, but the Philippine government should make strong representations for the search to continue.

ROUNDUP

2 girls drown

BALANGA CITY—Two girls drowned in a beach resort in Morong, Bataan, on May 4. Police said Maricar Laurenti, 8, and Angelica Sagod, 10, both of Valenzuela City, immediately went swimming when their group arrived at Villa Beach Resort in Barangay Poblacion at past 1 p.m. The girls were neighbors and were with a group of Valenzuela residents who went to Morong for a swimming party. Laurenti's parents told police that no one noticed them when they went swimming. The girls' bodies were recovered after an hour-long search.
Greg Refraccion, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Waste segregation enforced

TIGAS NG ULO NYO HA!

SABLAYAN, Occidental Mindoro—The municipal government started implementing on May 1 a policy not to collect garbage if these were not segregated, according to Gregorio Buhay Jr., farm supervisor. The wastes are being turned into fertilizer in Barangay Agsuli where the town's ecotourism park is located, about two kilometers from the poblacion.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Mangyan folk seek protection

BULALACAO, Oriental Mindoro—In the face of the growing ecotourism industry here, Lagtum Pasag, a Mangyan and a commissioner of the National Commission on Indigenous People appealed to the local government unit to make sure that Mangyan people were not displaced like what was happening to the Ati people in Boracay. Bulalacao Mayor Ernilo Villas assured the Mangyan people that they would be consulted on programs that have direct effects on them.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

9 boxing winners from Mindoro

SAN JOSE, Occidental Mindoro—Nine of the 10 winners in the "Boxing to the Max" games recently held at the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa are from this province. The nine are not inmates but from a boxing team accompanied by Beng Francisco, a boxing enthusiast based in Sablayan town. Joe Francisco, Beng's husband and trainer of the inmates, said the inmates need more food and vitamins to perform better in the games.
Madonna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Palaro delegate found dead

LEGAZPI CITY—A Palarong Pambansa delagate from Cagayan Valley was found dead by his mother inside their quarters at the Concepcion Grande Elementary School in Naga City, 10 hours before the event's opening ceremonies. At about 3:30 a.m., Sunday, Ronald Tuliao, 24, of Centro 3, Lassam, Cagayan and part of the delegation's kitchen committee, was found dead by his mother Cleofe, head of the committee. Tuliao was brought to the Bicol Medical Center in Naga but was declared dead on arrival. Dennis Agbayani, coordinator of the Cagayan Valley delegation, said the death was due to cardiac pulmonary arrest. The body was airlifted to Tuguegarao on Monday while the case is still under investigation by police. *Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Dynamite kills fisherman

LEGAZPI CITY—A fisherman died instantly after a dynamite he was to throw into the sea to catch fish exploded before he could let go of it. Police identified the fisherman as Samson Solomon, 32.
Ephraim Aguilar, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Tornado destroys P4M in crops

COTABATO CITY—A tornado destroyed some P4 million worth of agricultural products when it hit a remote village in Tampakan, South Cotabato on Saturday. Luisito Reina, chair of Barangay Bukang Liwayway, said heavy rains with strong winds first flattened some 25,000 hectares of banana trees and other crops at about 7 p.m. Then a spiralling wind followed, uprooting banana trees. Also destroyed was a 50-hectare banana plantation of Global Food Inc.
Edwin Fernandez, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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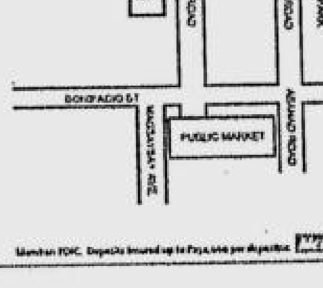

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Stocks soar to 7-year high

From page A1

vestment officer at ING, adding that the medium-to-long term trend was up.

"This is an indication that, one, finally investors are recognizing that the Philippines is back on the radar screen and, two, that the Philippines is an improving story on the macroeconomic front," Garcia added.

In a report, the US investment bank JP Morgan heralded the current period as the "start of a new era" for the Philippines, saying it had upgraded the country to an "overweight" in the Asia-Pacific stock markets.

The bulk of Monday's trade was driven by foreign investors who bought P3.77 billion and sold P2.15 billion worth of shares. Net foreign inflow hit P1.6 billion with only the mining sector in the red, down 2.6 percent after hitting a record high in mid-April.

Year-to-date net foreign inflows into the Philippines of $163 million have caught up with the total inflow for 2005, according to Nomura data, and was higher than both Indonesia and Malaysia.

"What is surprising is the speed by which the market has gone up. It happened so fast that investors are buying like there is no tomorrow," said Edgar Bancod, head of research at ATR Kim Eng Securities.

"Foreign interest has returned. They view the Philippines as a laggard play," said Mark Tan, Singapore-based director of Asian equities at UOB Asset Management, which has Philippine investments.

"They have not performed as well as the rest of the Asian markets since the recovery in 2002. So there's probably a lot of catch-up going on right now," Tan said.

The Philippine Stock Exchange, which has the shortest trading day in Asia at two-and-a-half hours, had been left behind by rival equity markets. Local shares are trading at an average of about five times their expected 2006 earnings, cheaper than Thailand's 10.4 times and Indonesia's 12.2 times expected earnings, according to Reuters data.

Better fundamentals

But fundamental factors have started to improve.

The Philippine budget shortfall has been shrinking due to a higher value-added tax and the Arroyo administration has said it is on track to hit a 2006 deficit target of P125 billion, or 2.1 percent of gross domestic product, down from P146.5 billion in 2005.

"The Philippines is on track to reach a balanced budget by 2008 and a surplus in 2009," JP Morgan said.

Recent fiscal reforms, most notably in the implementation of the expanded value-added tax, have inspired the administration to project a balanced budget two years earlier than the official target of 2010.

Fears of a coup plot against President Macapagal-Arroyo have also eased after last week's Labor Day demonstrations, traditionally a flash point for violence, passed peacefully.

JP Morgan said the next stage was a higher annual growth trajectory of 6-8 percent in gross domestic product driven by the infrastructure and mining sectors, which are emerging from their lows and reclaiming their position as economic growth engines. The economy expanded 5.1 percent in 2005.

"For now, strong growth in remittances and BPOs (business process outsourcing) will continue to fuel domestic demand," said JP Morgan. "Favored cyclical plays are the property and banking sectors, which have already seen a turnaround."

Low interest rates

Analysts said investors were encouraged to shift to equities since last week on news of lower interest rates, tame inflation and stable first-quarter corporate earnings.

Investors cheered a government report that the inflation rate—the year-on-year increase in consumer prices—slowed to 7.1 percent in April from 7.6 percent in March.

"Inflation was lower than expected despite higher oil prices. And with a stronger peso, this boils down to a favorable sentiment in the market," Fitzgerald Aclan, head of research and strategy at BDO Trust, said.

Money also continued to pour into the stock market as interest rates remain at low levels. Last week, key interest rates of the central bank remained steady for the seventh straight month in line with its assessment that inflation would slow down starting the second semester.

The central bank's overnight borrowing rate stayed at 7.50 percent and its overnight lending rate at 9.75 percent.

Lower interest rates mean prospects of better corporate earnings as companies shell out less funds for their borrowings to fund expansion moves.

"We are looking at a 15-percent growth in earnings in the next two years. With the fiscal reforms in place, the peso strong and interest rates low, even banks now are finding it hard to find good yields and are shifting to equities. The market is very liquid," Jerome Gonzalez, head of research at fund manager Philippine Equity Management Inc., said.

Rising tide

"Even laggards in the index are being bought," said Mark Canizares, analyst at Citisecurities Inc. "There should be corrections, but the short term and the long term trend still points up and the market is actually breaking into new highs."

Garcia, who sees the next key resistance at 2,700 points, said the biggest short-term risk was the possibility that opposition leaders could try to revive last year's failed impeachment attempt against Ms Arroyo, though many analysts expect her allies in the lower house to defeat any impeachment bid.

The banking and property sectors have been particularly buoyant after the central bank decided last week to hold fire on borrowing costs—but gains have been well spread amid solid first-quarter corporate earnings.

Leading the market's bull run yesterday were blue chip stocks such as Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT), Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), Ayala Corp. (AC) and Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. (Metrobank).

PLDT, the country's biggest telco, rose 6 percent to P2,255 per share. AC, the largest conglomerate with interests in banking, telecoms and property, rose P42.50, or 9.8 percent, to P472.50.

Metrobank, the largest lender, rose 10.6 percent to P47, while its rival BPI rose 4.4 percent to P71.50.

SM Prime Holdings Inc., the country's largest mall developer and operator, on Monday said its first-quarter profit rose 8 percent as the higher sales tax failed to crimp consumer spending. Its shares added 11.11 percent to P9.

With reports from Reuters, AP

GMA wins king's pardon for 50 Filipinos

From page A1

ICT offered good possibilities. "We are promoting fast growing industries where high value jobs are most plentiful and we can use our most competitive resource—the great Filipino workers so well known to the Saudi business community," she said.

The Philippines has total mineral reserves valued at $1 trillion, Ms Arroyo said. It has the world's fifth largest mineral deposit, the fifth biggest of gold, the ninth biggest of copper and 20 percent of the world's nickel, she pointed out.

"Because Saudi Arabia is the energy giant of the world, we hope you can put up oil refining facilities in Mindanao in southern Philipines," Ms Arroyo said.

"Such a refinery can serve not only the Philippines but also the American West Coast market and eastern Indonesia which is closer to Mindanao than the Indonesian oil fields in Aceh," she said.

Recycle petrodollars

Bunye said Ms Arroyo urged Saudi investors to recycle their petrodollars by considering equity investments in oil importing countries like the Philippines.

The President was expected to renew her appeal for more investments during her speech before the Saudi Chamber of Commerce in the afternoon.

Ms Arroyo arrived to a red carpet welcome led by King Abudullah on Sunday. She came with a lean official entourage backed by Philippine industry leaders.

Bilateral relations between the Philippines and Saudi Arabia were established in 1969. In 2004, Saudi Arabia was the Philippines' 12th largest trading partner in the world and its largest trading partner in the Middle East.

But trade largely favored Saudi Arabia for the past five years due to the high percentage of oil imports. Philippine exports to Saudi only account for 3 percent of bilateral trade.

Saudi's Aramco also owns a majority in Petron, and its president and chief executive officer, Khalid D. Al-Faddagh, is a Saudi national.

Later yesterday, Ms Arroyo met with Cimatu and the other Philippine ambassadors to the Gulf states and expressed concern about the safety of Filipinos against terrorist attacks.

Cimatu said an updated handbook for the safe conduct of Filipino workers in the Middle East had been published.

Titled "Safety and Emergency Handbook for OFWs, 2006 Edition," the 61-page glossy manual contains safety measures one can follow to avoid getting hurt in car or suicide bomb attacks.

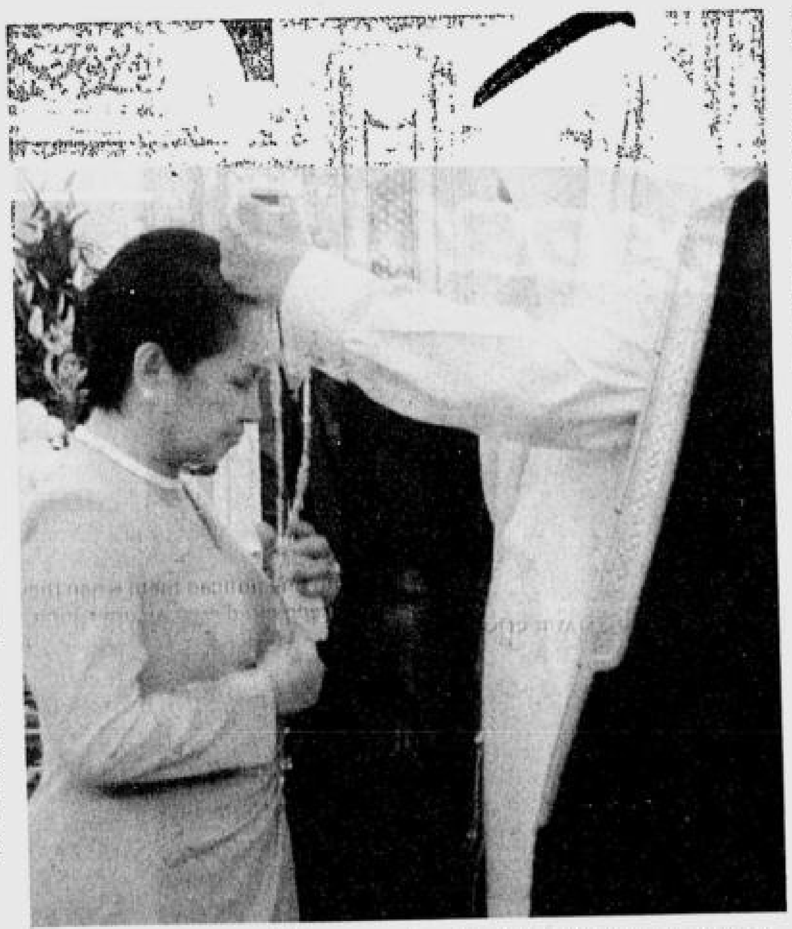
"It's all here, they can understand and memorize these," Cimatu said.

A similar handbook was distributed to OFWs in 2003, following the war on terror in Iraq, he said.

Cimatu said that the counterterrorism measures, such as the setting up of checkpoints, could affect the mobility of the Filipino workers.

Ms Arroyo arrived here at 5 p.m. Sunday (10 p.m. in Manila) on her first state visit to the kingdom where about a million Filipinos work in industries, hospitals and as domestic help.

She will visit Jeddah and Damman before returning to the Philippines on Thursday.



PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo receives the King Abdulaziz Medallion, the Saudi Arabian kingdom's highest award for a head of state, from King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. JERRY CARUAL/MALACAÑANG-PCPO

GMA to hear Filipino grievances in Saudi

RIYADH—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo is likely to get an earful about the problems faced by the army of Filipinos working in Saudi Arabia who want help in return for filling the national purse.

Leaders of the near million-strong Filipino community will meet with Ms Arroyo, who arrived Sunday for a four-day visit to the oil-rich kingdom, to plead with her to crack down on recruitment agencies in their homeland.

They say these agencies deceive applicants about prospective job terms and send minors to Saudi Arabia, making them vulnerable to abuse.

The abuse range from nonpayment of already low salaries to physical assault, with some workers running away from employers and risking even more trouble.

Filipinos employed in Saudi Arabia are part of some 8 million Philippine expatriates who remitted a record $10.7 billion to their families last year.

"A 'guesstimate' is that $2 billion to $3 billion in annual remittances come from Filipinos in Saudi Arabia," making them the biggest single source of remittances, according to Manuel Roldan, labor attaché at the Philippine Embassy in Riyadh.

According to embassy officials, Filipinos living in Saudi Arabia are roughly equally divided between men and women, with 80 percent of the females working as domestic helpers and the rest as nurses, dressmakers and janitors.

Most Filipino males work in factories, on construction sites or as drivers, while some 15 percent have white-collar jobs, chiefly as engineers.

Ms Arroyo was to meet with Filipino community members in Riyadh yesterday, and in the Red Sea city of Jeddah and the eastern city of Al-Khobar in the latter stages of her four-day trip.

"A common problem faced by Filipinos here is the nonpayment or delayed payment of wages or end-of-service benefits," Roldan said.

"Another is delayed repatriation, with employers withholding the passports and exit visas of workers, sometimes because they need their services and won't let them go before they replace them," he said.

Some housemaids face other hardships, including maltreatment, overwork and sexual abuse, community activists say.

"Some employers 'lend' a housemaid to other members of their family during the weekend," instead of allowing them to rest, said Gina Abitona, a 39-year-old mother of four who runs a learning center for children in her home.

Much of the problem begins in the Philippines, where recruitment agencies "fool" job applicants, probably "in connivance" with employers in Saudi Arabia, according to Abitona.

"The contracts signed back home are switched once the worker arrives here," she said, to change the position or lower the salary. *AFP*

High court orders new polls to end Thai crisis

From page A1

too hastily in organizing the poll, making it unfair to small parties.

"The organization of the election by the Election Commission was unconstitutional," court spokesperson Paiboon Warahapaithoon said in a nationally televised news conference called to announce the judges' ruling.

Though the Constitution states that elections must be called within 60 days of the dissolution of parliament, the court ruled the commission's decision to call polls within 37 days "went against the intention of the Constitution," Paiboon said.

Confidential voting

Another point of contention was the positioning of polling booths, which the court agreed had "violated the principle of confidential voting," Paiboon said.

In a separate vote, the court ruled 9 to 5 in favor of holding new elections, Paiboon said.

The Constitutional Court's ruling was expected to put an end to a flurry of legal activity that had saddled two of the country's high courts with hundreds of lawsuits filed against the elections.

Complaint vs poll body

The Administrative Court, which adjudicates disputes involving state agencies, was examining a complaint lodged by another group of academics against the Election Commission and had said it would rule May 16. A ruling was still expected as a formality.

Street protests started earlier this year, with critics accusing Thaksin of widespread corruption and abuse of power. He was also blamed for mishandling a Muslim insurgency in southern Thailand and stifling the country's once vibrant media.

To calm dissent and win a fresh mandate, Thaksin dissolved Parliament in February and called snap polls. His Thai Rak Thai party won 57 percent of the vote, but millions of Thais cast protest votes and the opposition boycott left the lower house without the full 500 lawmakers required for Parliament to convene.

Break from politics

Days after the election, Thaksin announced he was taking "a break" from politics to restore national unity and passed his duties to his deputy, Chitchai Wannasathit.

Suriyasai Katasila, spokesperson of the People's Alliance for Democracy, which led street protests against Thaksin, urged the ruling party not to allow Thaksin's return to office.

"Thaksin was the one who caused this crisis," he said. *AP*

Mining museum to rise for Baguio centennial

From page A1

ucator Salvador P. Lopez, Baguio-born Albert said American-led mining operations helped nurture what was once the "vast wilderness" of Benguet into a "bustling metropolis."

She announced the formation of the Baguio Historical and Mining Museum Foundation to alumni of the Baguio City National High School during their homecoming on Saturday at the Baguio Country Club.

The museum will rise here in two years, in time for Baguio's celebration as a chartered city, Albert said. "I just received [the clearance from] the Securities and Exchange Commission last week."

The museum will house relics showing the growth of old American mines on the city outskirts and focusing on the history of firms like Benguet Corp., the oldest recorded Philippine mining firm, as well as obscure and defunct operations like Demonstration Mine, which ceased when Japanese forces invaded the city in 1942.

Diplomatic frontier

A former Philippine foreign secretary and Malacañang's envoy for mining, Albert noted that diplomacy had become mining's new frontier because of the need to disclose to the global industry the Supreme Court decision that declared constitutional the 1995 Philippine Mining Act.

Mining has remained the single biggest industry which the government expects would turn the tide for many poverty-stricken regions like the Cordillera, she said.

Albert said it took her seven years as ambassador to Australia to win a trade deal allowing Canberra to buy Philippine mangoes.

There will be cynics, Albert acknowledged, saying that much of the antimining sentiments plaguing the industry today came from the old mining towns in Benguet.

Baguio seal

The city's original seal bears out its connection to mining, she said. "The first Baguio seal is crossed diagonally by four golden dots that stand for the mineral wealth of Baguio's four major mining communities."

"Who in Baguio [does] not remember Antamok (where the oldest Philippine mining firm Benguet Corp. used to operate in Itogon town) or Lepanto (Consolidated Mining Corp. which operates in Mankayan town)?" she said.

She asked the BCNHS alumni to provide data and resources to "flesh out Baguio's connection to the gold that has drawn Europeans to the city since the 1890s."

Mining flourished under the American colonial government in the 1920s which designed and chartered Baguio as its only hill station in Asia, Albert said.

Ibaloi accounts

Even historical accounts from the indigenous Ibaloi community confirm mining's role in expanding Baguio. Eufronio Pungayao, a linguist and an Ibaloi historian, said the city's economy started with Chinese trading houses that supplied food to American miners and their workers.

"In fact, the [city] population grew due to the attraction of mining," said Joseph Jude Carantes, an Ibaloi clan leader and advocate for ancestral land rights.

Albert said national officials, like Sen. Juan Flavier, were products of Baguio's old mining culture. Flavier grew up in Itogon.

But some Baguio residents want "the whole truth about mining" to come out in Albert's museum.

Centennial activities

Loreto Ann Tamayo, an environmentalist, said the facility should provide details on how old-school mining ended up despoiling Benguet lands.

Albert's initiative is one of many independent projects geared toward highlighting Baguio's 100 years of existence.

Mayor Braulio Yaranon has formed a core group of old-timers who will prepare for the centennial celebration.

Many of them, like Joseph Alabanza, former presidential adviser on urban reform, and Virginia de Guia, a former Baguio mayor, have been pushing for the restoration and preservation of the city's remaining open lands as part of the centennial advocacy.

Alabanza, also a city architect, has been at the forefront of an architectural preservation program here, while De Guia is spearheading a crusade to stop the construction of a flyover in the city.

UP THERE, that's where Pastor Emata is going, weather-willing, after three days of rest. Emata and Leo Oracion, another climber from the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE), made it to Camp 3 on April 29 and succeeded in installing the rope they would need for their summit push in two weeks. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Race to Everest heats up

Network war hits roof of the world

By Alcuin Papa

TOP FPMEE climber Leo Oracion waves from close to the top of the world. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

TWO TEAMS VYING TO BE THE FIRST TO plant the Philippine flag on 29,035-foot Mt. Everest are virtually neck and neck as they race to the top of the world's highest mountain.

Two climbers from the First Philippine Mt. Everest Expedition (FPMEE) team made it up to Camp 3 (22,376 feet) and then returned to Everest Base Camp (17,700 feet) on April 29.

According to an update sent to the INQUIRER, Leo Oracion and Pastor Emata had succeeded in installing the rope they would be needing for their summit push in two weeks.

Expedition team leader Arturo Valdez advised the two to go to Dingboche town in Nepal, below the Everest Base Camp, to rest for three to four days.

Currently, Oracion and Emata are back at Camp 2 and are getting ready to return to Camp 3, while their support team is at Everest Base Camp. Camp 2 now serves as the team's advance base, where they have stored their equipment and food supplies.

Valdez said the critical days would be around the second week of May. "Barring bad weather, the two will have a good crack at the summit soon," he said, adding that, so far, no one from any other expedition had yet climbed the summit this season.

Meanwhile, according to his local contacts, another Filipino climber, Romi Garduce, managed to reach Camp 3 last weekend and was said to be at Everest Base Camp resting. He was also said to be making his summit push two weeks from now.

So far, there has been no official word from yet another Filipino climber, Dale Abenojar, who was said to be climbing the mountain on the Tibetan side also known as Northeast Ridge. Unconfirmed reports said a Spanish team climbing on the north face of Everest met a Filipino named Denis on the way up.

In August of last year, adventure racers Oracion and Emata managed to summit Mt. Muztagh-Ata (24,758 feet) in the Himalayan range and set the record for the highest altitude reached by a Filipino.

The record was broken a month later when Garduce, a systems analyst in his 30s, peaked Mt. Cho-Oyu (26,906 feet), the sixth highest mountain in the world.

Expert mountaineers agree that making several climbs between the camps is the best way to acclimatize oneself and overcome mountain sickness. It also lets the climbers stow gear and supplies they would need for the summit push.

With good weather once they reach Camp 4, the climbers after some rest could make their final ascent for the summit.

The FPMEE is supported by the ABS-CBN media network while Garduce is backed by rival GMA-7.

Saudi charged with murder for beheading 'mother-in-law'

By Marlon Ramos
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMP VICENTE LIM, LAGUNA—POLICE have charged a Saudi national with murder two days after he allegedly beheaded the mother of his common-law wife while the woman was taking a bath at her home within this Philippine National Police camp, police said yesterday.

Supt. Roland Bustos, Calamba police chief, identified the man as Cyad Bander Zisdullat, 35, who was arrested Saturday night shortly after witnesses saw him fleeing the house with bloodied hands. Other reports identified the suspect as Bander Abdullah Zayad.

Quoting witnesses, Bustos said Zisdullat downed several bottles of beer and apparently used shabu (methamphetamine hydrochloride) moments before he barged into the house and, using a 12-inch kitchen knife, cut off the head of Pacencia Ariaso, 65, the mother of his live-in partner, Virginia, at around 6 p.m. last Saturday.

Neighbors of the victim saw Zisdullat running away from their house with his hands stained with blood.

Police collared the escaping suspect near the gate of the Silangan exit of the South Luzon Expressway.

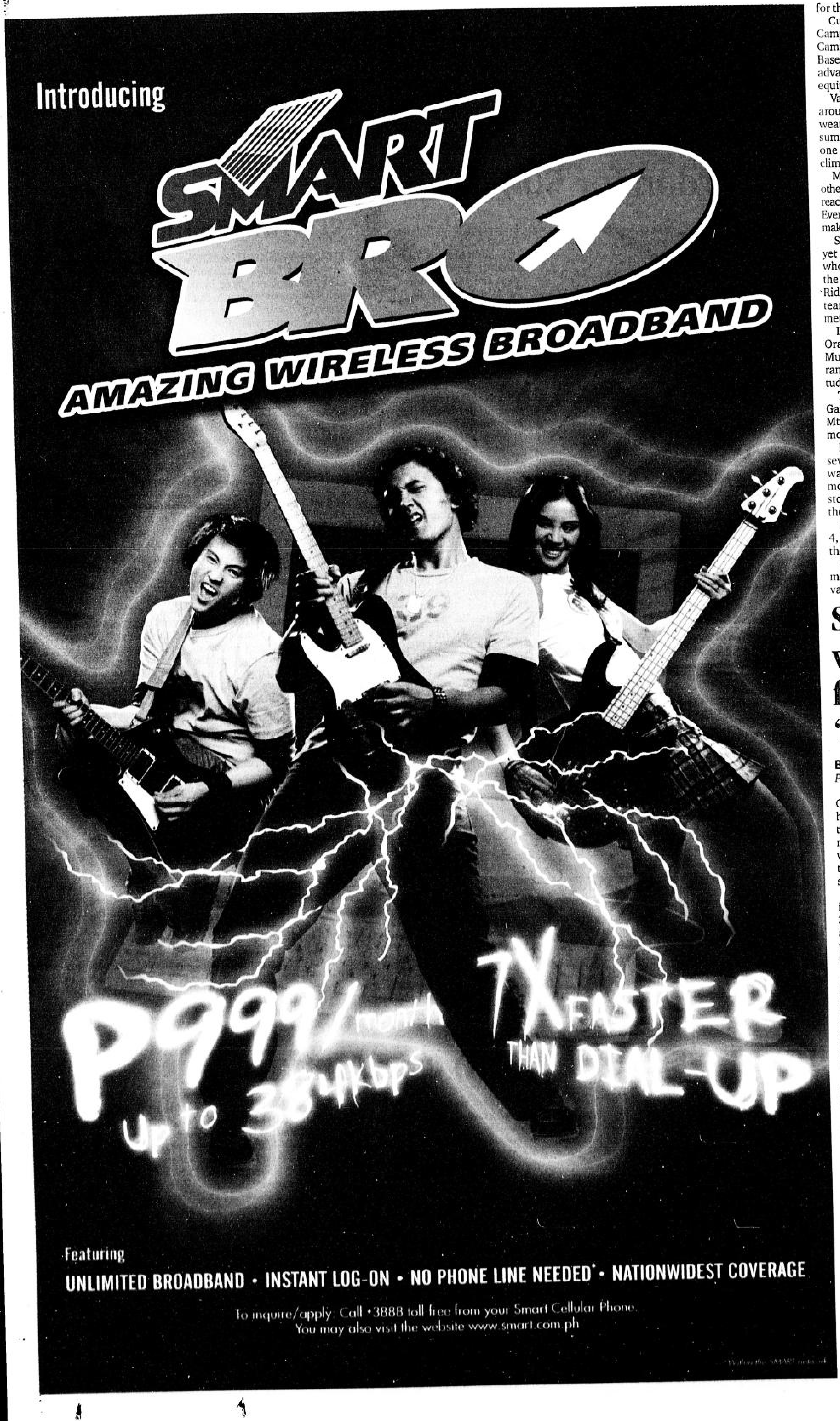
Virginia told police that she met Zisdullat in 2000 and they started to cohabit four years later.

She said the suspect used to operate a recruitment agency that sent Filipino contract workers to Saudi Arabia and other countries in the Middle East.

Virginia said Zisdullat began acting differently after his business went bankrupt two years ago and he used up all of the P2 million that he had inherited from his parents.

Virginia said their situation became worse when Zisdullat came back to the country after his brief visit to Saudi Arabia in November last year.

Bustos said Zisdullat became paranoid and would often tell Virginia not to leave the house as a satellite was monitoring them. He also ordered Virginia not to leave their son because somebody might kill him.



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Rival gangs clash in Taguig jail; 18 hurt

Riot quelled after tension-filled two hours

By Jocelyn R. Uy

EIGHTEEN INMATES, INCLUDING four members of the Abu Sayyaf Group, were injured on Sunday during a fight that lasted for two hours between two rival gangs inside a jail facility at Camp Bagong Diwa, Taguig City.

The free-for-all broke out between 50 to 70 members of the Sigue-Sigue Sputnik and Bahala na gangs detained at the Metro Manila District Jail-Manila Sector (MMDJ-MS) at around 5:20 p.m.

The MMDJ-MS is an extension of the Manila City Jail and houses 702 inmates, most of whom are facing drug charges. The four-story facility is adjacent to the Special Intensive Care Area, (SICA) where 137 suspected members of the ASG are detained. The two facilities are separated by chicken wire and galvanized iron sheets.

Chief Insp. Ruel Rivera, MMDJ-MS warden, told the INQUIRER that the melee started in front of the jail's chapel before spreading throughout the facility.

"They were punching, pummeling and stabbing each other until the number of those fighting got bigger. Some were also on the verge of attacking our personnel," Rivera said

Warning shots

An Associated Press wire report quoted him as saying, "The crowd was too big, it was difficult to control them so our men fired several shots."

The jail guards fired warning shots in the air to stop the rioters but the fighting continued so the guards started firing into the ground, Rivera added.

"At first we fired in the air. But they were really uncontrollable so we resorted to firing on the ground to contain the riot and prevent possible deaths," he said. The bullets, however, ricocheted, hitting at least 14 inmates inside the facility. Some of the bullets pierced the wall and hit four suspected ASG members detained at the SICA.

"Initial findings disclosed that the galvanized metal sheet dividing the MMDJ-MS and the SICA building had 10 bullet holes. Six bullet marks were found in the concrete wall and one hit the iron grill," said Supt. Edgar Bolcio, MMDJ warden.

Seven members of the *Bahala Na* Gang were treated at the prison infirmary for minor injuries. Six other inmates were brought to the Rizal Medical Center in Pasig City for stab and shrapnel wounds. They were identified as John Ambrosio, Marvin Sandoval, Rolando Advincula, Julius Felix, Allan Advincula and Joel Dungo.

Two of the four suspected Abu members injured in the riot, Iraji Isnaji and Ibrahim Upao Musa taken to the hospital. The two other wounded Abu suspects were identified as Daud Baru and Diki Ekong.

An AP report said that heavily armed police commandos rushed to the jail to bring the nearly two-hour riot under control. It added that Manila police spokesperson Agrimero Cruz denied that there was an attempt to stage a jail break, although officials who searched the prison compound seized various improvised weapons, including knives and clubs.

With AP report

2 fires break out in Marikina City; P5-M lost

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

TWO FIRES BROKE OUT IN MARIKINA City yesterday and the other night, the third and fourth incidents reported in a four-day span.

More than 40 families were left homeless in the two incidents.

Marikina City Fire Marshal Chief Insp. Antonio Razal said the fires were caused by an unattended candle and an improvised lighted kerosene lamp that fell to the floor.

The first incident was reported at 9 p.m. Saturday, in a two-story house being rented by Michael Escobar on Bonanza Phase III in Barangay Fortune.

The fire, which was caused by an unattended candle, began on the upper floor and quickly spread to at least three other houses. It caused P1.5 million in damages and injured a man identified as Gregor Pangilinan who sustained a fracture on his left arm.

Responding firefighters managed to put out the fire at 10:28 p.m.

Yesterday morning, another fire broke out in a crowded area on Calamansi Street in Barangay Concepcion Uno, razing at least 36 houses, SFO1 Noel Alarcon said.

The fire began at 5:45 a.m. in a two-story house being rented by Lilibeth Balbona. Firefighters managed to place it under control at 7:30 a.m.

Razal said the fire, which destroyed P4 million worth of property, originated from an improvised kerosene lamp. Fortunately, nobody was hurt.

"In both cases, the houses where the fires began had no electrical connections," the fire official said.

On Thursday, at least 43 families lost their homes when a fire, possibly caused by an illegal connection, erupted in Tumana, Barangay Concepcion Uno.

On Saturday, a fire caused by electrical overloading razed nine houses and partially damaged five others in Doña Petra also in Barangay Concepcion Uno.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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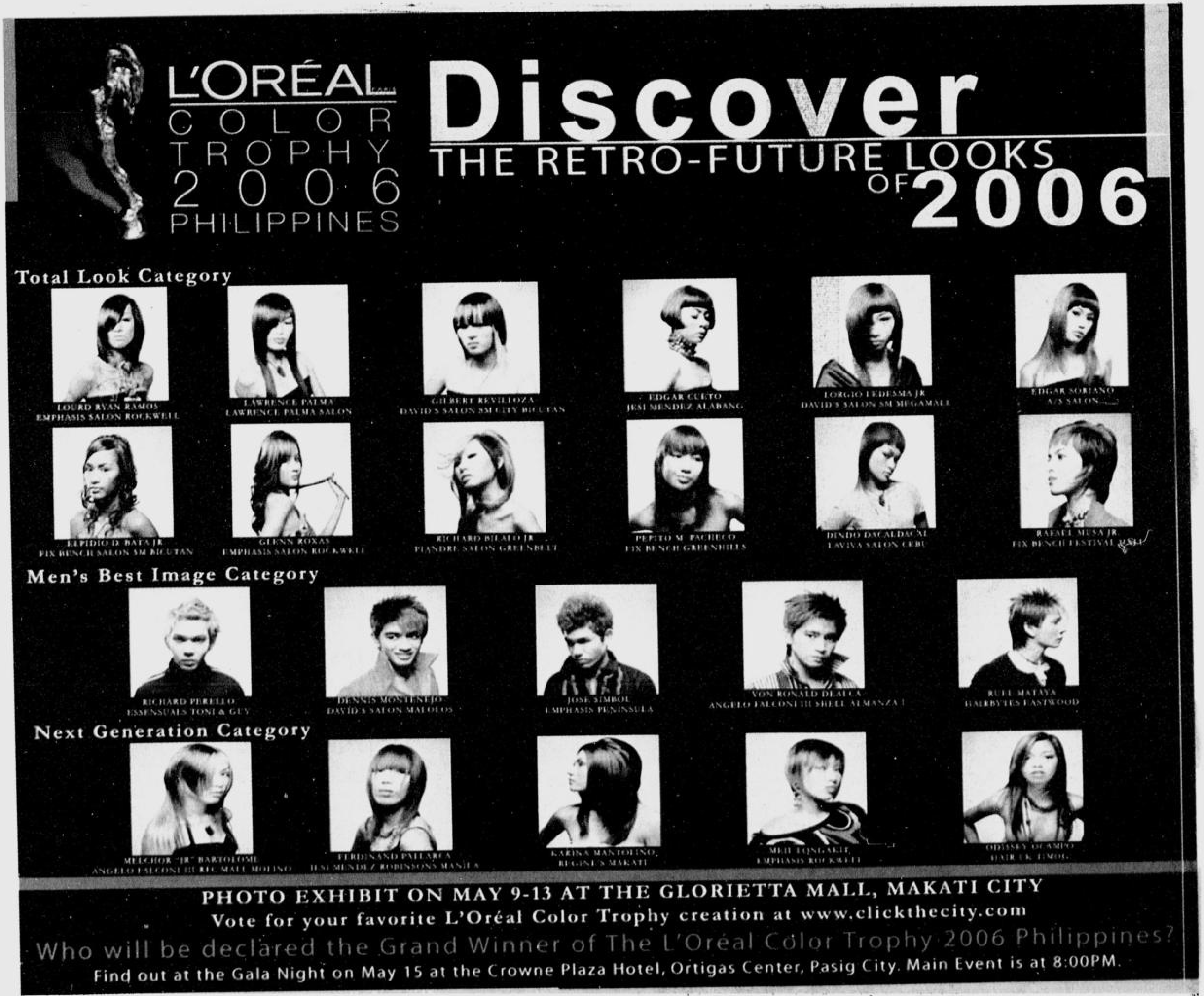
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PHOTO EXHIBIT ON MAY 9-13 AT THE GLORIETTA MALL, MAKATI CITY
Vote for your favorite L'Oréal Color Trophy creation at www.clickthecity.com
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ClickTheCity.com

Lack of design proposal stalls flyover repair

By Leila B. Salaverria

REPAIR WORK ON THE DAMAGED C5-Katipunan flyover in Quezon City has not started because the Department of Public Works and Highways is still waiting for a private firm to submit a proposal on the repairs to be carried out on the structure.

Assistant Director Gil Reyes of the DPWH's Bureau of Design said they expect to get a report soon from private contractor F. F. Cruz and Company Inc.

"We are still waiting for the proposal of F. F. Cruz and Company. We allowed them to conduct load testing, and after that, to submit their proposal. They could suggest total replacement of weakened portions or the strengthening of the flyover," Reyes said in an interview yesterday.

The company had offered to submit a proposal on the repair of the flyover free of charge, after conducting tests, also for free, to determine how much weight the structure could carry.

Reyes said that if the proposal submitted by F. F. Cruz is approved and the repair work starts before June, the flyover could be rehabilitated by the end of the year.

The C5-Katipunan flyover was damaged when a fire razed the houses underneath the structure last December. The blaze weakened the flyover's supports, prompting the DPWH to ban vehicles weighing over 10 tons from using it.

Reyes, however, assured the public that the flyover remains safe since the DPWH had put up steel supports underneath the structure to strengthen it after the fire.

"The flyover is safe to use. As you can see, we have conducted shoring operations there a few months ago," he said.

Reyes added that after receiving the proposal from F. F. Cruz, the DPWH would review it to determine its feasibility and cost-effectiveness.

He added that the department may also invite other firms to submit their proposals. Once a suitable proposal has been found, it will be submitted to DPWH Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. for approval.

Reyes estimated that the repair of the flyover could cost from P80 million to P100 million.

Sweet-talked into getting freebies? Beware, NBI warns

By Tina G. Santos

THEY SOLD OILS WHICH THEY claimed would make one invisible. But the product apparently did not work for the seven suspected swindlers who were arrested by operatives of the National Bureau of Investigation in Baclaran last week.

NBI officer-in-charge Nestor Mantaring identified the suspects as Alfredo Molina, Renato Ocenar, Eduardo Reyes, Jessie Vital, Lenny Gutierrez, Alma Orag and Lorena Guarino

They were arrested after authorities said they received numerous complaints about the group's illegal activities.

NBI Regional Director Ruel Lasala said the group's victims were mostly women, particularly those shopping in crowded areas like Baclaran, Quiapo and Divisoria.

An investigation showed that members of the group would approach potential victims and give them free detergent samples and a "gate pass" to a makeshift tent where they would receive more freebies, including medicine.

Inside the tent, the victims would be enticed to listen to a fortuneteller who would give them various oils that were supposed to have miraculous powers such as making the user invisible.

Two of the group's victims, Mary Fe Reyes, 28, of Cavite and Nilda Natal, 54, of Makati City, claimed they were forced to "donate" P250 for a small wooden cross which allegedly came from a miraculous tree in Dolores, Quezon.

Reyes said the suspects demanded an additional P600 from her after she was given two more small pieces of wood called "sinag-araw," which the suspects claimed would bring her luck

She added she had no choice but to do so because a group of men had surrounded her and appeared to intimidate her.

Molina, 32, the leader of the group, said they had been arrested many times before by the Parañaque police but they were always released after they bribed the lawmen. He added that that they have been operating in Baclaran since December. *With Erika Sauler, trainee*

DANCERS groove in the middle of Ayala Avenue in a grand parade to mark Earth Day and Makati City's 336th founding anniversary.
ROMY HOMILLADA

Makati marks Earth Day with parade of blooms and veggies

By Tarra V. Quismundo

A RIOT OF COLORS EXPLODED right in the heart of the country's financial center yesterday as around 6,000 people dressed in nature-inspired costumes joined a grand parade to celebrate Makati City's 336th foundation day.

From 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., the stretch of Ayala Avenue became a festive sea of nature-inspired images featuring floats which bore gigantic flowers, real fruits, vegetables, sea creatures and a live carabao (water buffalo).

More participants

"Every year, more and more people participate in this event," said Mayor Jejomar Binay." A while ago, I was trying to see the end of the parade but I couldn't. More corporations joined now, and it was very organized. Every year, the participation increases. This is a form of giving thanks to God, first and foremost, for all the blessings that we've been getting and the benefits that the city government gives to our people.

"I think it's apt that we chose the environment as a theme because it seems that now, we tend to forget all about it. I think you only have to feel how hot it is to be reminded about the environment. It should be the rainy season now but it's still very hot," he added.

Among the participants in the parade were employees and officials of top Makati-based corporations and hotels, barangay officials, local government officials and workers, residents and students.

The turnout exceeded last year's parade where 5,000 participated, said Joey Salgado, Makati Information and Community Relations Department chief.

"Every year, it's getting bigger. This year is our biggest," said Salgado.

To prepare for the event, Ayala Avenue was closed to traffic as early as 7 a.m., from Gil Puyat Avenue toward the review stand in front of Tower One.

When it was their turn to wow the VIP audience of diplomats, top business executives and city officials, every delegation—private corporations, schools, City Hall departments and clustered Makati barangays—made sure they pleased most every sense.

Applause, applause

Wearing gold and blue body paint or covered up in an arrangement of blooms, the participants received generous applause as they danced animatedly in the middle of the avenue, to the beat of accompanying marching bands and *ati-atihan* groups.

At the tail-end of the parade were nature-inspired floats, many of which were made of bamboo and decorated with straw hats, colorful masks, and flowers made of native materials.

Ping Lacson should be having sleepless nights

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

SEN. PANFILO LACSON IS PUTTING up a brave front in the espionage charge against him and former President Erap (Estrada) in the US courts.

But deep inside, he could be shaking all over. The charge is no laughing matter. Lacson and Erap are unindicted co-conspirators of former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) intelligence analyst Leandro Aragoncillo who has pleaded guilty to the espionage charge. Aragoncillo is awaiting his sentence. This is one case over which Lacson should have sleepless nights. Espionage is a very serious offense in the US, so serious that the maximum penalty is death.

Well, Lacson and Erap won't get the death penalty since they were just recipients of intelligence information passed on to them by Aragoncillo. But they will be in US prisons for sometime. If Lacson got away with heinous crimes like the Kuratong Baleleng multiple murder case in this country, he can't escape punishment in the United States for the espionage charge. There, he can't intimidate the judges.

If he refuses to go to the United States to face trial, he won't be able to set foot on American soil again. The moment he visits the United States, he'll be arrested right at the airport immigration counter.

The espionage case against Erap will have to wait since the plunder case against him is still being heard in the country. The plunder case has priority over the espionage case in the United States. If the former president gets acquitted of the plunder charge, then his next problem is how to hurdle the espionage case in the United States courts.

As for former House Speaker Arnold Fuentebella, another unindicted alleged co-conspirator in the espionage case, expect an extradition request from the United States soon. If Fuentebella is not extradited for one reason or another, he will surely miss Las Vegas where he allegedly loses millions in gambling.

* * *

Whoever is advocating that employees of the Metropolitan Sewerage System (MWSS) set up a housing project the La Mesa Dam reservoir complex should have his head examined.

La Mesa Dam should stay in its pristine form, free from encroachment by people. Given the Filipino's penchant for dirtying the environment, trash might end up in the drinking water supply of Metro Manila if the housing project at La Mesa Dam pushes through.

Look what happened to our rivers and *esteros*. Just imagine La Mesa Dam being made the dumping ground of human waste and discarded plastic wrappers and bottles. I apologize for saying this, but we Filipinos don't know how to take care of our environment.

* * *

Boxing sensation Manny Pacquiao is allegedly planning to run for mayor in a town near General Santos City. This country is really a "demo-crazy" where anybody who has become somebody can run for an elective office and win.

It doesn't matter whether or not the candidate is fit for the position. As long as he's popular, that's all that matters. People haven't learned from Joseph Estrada's presidency.

* * *

While Optical Media Board (OMB) chair Edu Manzano is working his butt off conducting raids and confiscating pirated discs and equipment, some unscrupulous personnel at the Bureau of Customs are reportedly having a heyday selling confiscated stuff to the pirates.

The problem of pirated discs will never end unless Manzano hits those rascals hard and fast, and gets the customs bureau to have those stored materials turned over to the OMB and destroyed.

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Re-Bid

The Philippine Carabao Center, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, invites suppliers / distributors / contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following:

Particulars	Approved Budget
I. Semen Tanks	P 41,280,000.00
II. Asian Utility Vehicles (AUV)	3,200,000.00
Total	P 44,480,000.00

vvvvvvvvvvvvvvv

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s). Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations.

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	May 15-19, 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference (PCC Headquarters and Gene Pool)	May 29, 2006 (2 p.m.)
3. Opening of Bids (PCC Headquarters and Gene Pool)	June 13, 2006 (2 p.m.)
4. Bid Evaluation	June 14-19, 2006
5. Post-qualification	June 20-26, 2006
6. Notice of Award	10 calendar days

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of five hundred Pesos (P500.00) to the Philippine Carabao Center Cashier.

The Philippine Carabao Center assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) EULOGIO M. MONTEALTO
BAC Chairman

(PDI – May 9, 2006)

METROBRIEFS

Ban on kitchen knives

WHEN in Pasay, leave your kitchen knives at home or you could end up in jail. Bent on making the city "100 percent" safe, the city council has passed on third and final reading an ordinance prohibiting the display or possession of kitchen or butcher knives of all sorts and sizes on the streets. "Knives have been commonly used as a tool to threaten, if not, inflict injury on victims [based on] the criminal acts that had been committed before on our streets," stated the ordinance sponsored by Councilor Edita Vergel de Dios. She explained that the council had earlier passed an ordinance banning the possession of sharp and deadly weapons in public places, but it did not cover kitchen knives. "The city council acknowledges this issue and thus, will work further to ensure the safety of our citizenry," Vergel de Dios said. Anyone caught violating the law would be fined P1,000 or face imprisonment of one month, or both depending on the court's discretion. *Jocelyn R. Uy*

Trader wounded, robbed

A CHINESE-FILIPINO businessman on his way to deposit money in the bank was stabbed and wounded by two men in Navotas yesterday morning. Police identified the victim as Jacson Cua, a resident of Apahap Street in Barangay NBBS. Cua was on board a tricycle on his way to the bank when two men stopped the vehicle and tried to grab his clutch bag which contained a still undetermined amount of money. The trader, however, resisted, and was stabbed in the chest by one of the robbers. Cua was taken by the tricycle driver to the Tondo Medical Center. P01 Joseph Provido, officer-on-case, said they were trying to track down the robbers by talking to witnesses. *Nancy C. Carvajal*

Europe Month in Manila

A FILM screening on softball, an exhibit of award-winning photographs from the 49th World Press Photo Contest, horse racing and golf tournaments are some of the highlights of "Europe Month "—a festival showcasing the best of European arts and sports. The delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines, in cooperation with the European Union member states' embassies and partners, is staging the festival to show Filipinos their unique yet diverse culture and to commemorate the founding of the European Union on May 9, 1950. A reception will be hosted today by Ambassador Jan de Kok, head of delegation of the European Commission to the Philippines at the Mandarin Hotel in Makati City.

Isabel G. Castillo; 85

ISABEL Generoso Castillo of Bauan, Batangas, passed away on May 7 at the Eagle Ridge Hospital in Coquitlam, British Columbia, Canada. She was 85. Her remains will be cremated on May 10 after a funeral Mass. Her ashes will be brought to Manila early next week and buried next to her husband, Dr. Benjamin A. Castillo, at the Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City. Chabeng, as she was called by family and friends, is survived by her children Benjie, Maribel, Randy, Bobby and Toti and their spouses, 10 grandchildren, sisters and brother. She had lived in Canada for the last 13 years.

Variant gene linked to prostate cancer found

A TEAM OF SCIENTISTS SAYS IT has detected a variant gene associated with prostate cancer, a finding that may make possible a diagnostic test to help decide which patients are the best candidates for aggressive treatment.

The discovery, by DeCode Genetics, a gene-finding company in Iceland, may also help explain why African-Americans, in whom the variant is more common, have a greater incidence of the disease.

Prostate cancer is a common disease with many causes, both genetic and environmental. Detection of the underlying genes is difficult because each seems to have only a small effect on the risk of getting the disease.

The new variant, described online Sunday in the journal Nature Genetics, was first found in Icelandic men and then detected in Sweden and in two populations in the United States.

The variant is carried by about 13 percent of men of European ancestry. It raises the risk of getting prostate cancer by 60 percent, compared with men who are not carriers, and accounts for about 8 percent of all cases, according to the scientists, led by Laufey T. Amundadottir of DeCode.

Among African-Americans, the variant carries the same risk but is twice as common. This could explain "a significant part" of the reason that prostate cancer is more common in this population, said Dr. Kari Stefansson, DeCode's chief executive.

Stefansson said the variant was "the first major gene in prostate cancer and the first to be replicated in many populations."

The company plans to develop a diagnostic test, based on the new variant, to help physicians decide how aggressively to treat the disease, especially in men over 70, on the assumption that men who carry the variant are more likely to develop serious cancer. *NYT*

Labor MPs sharpen knives for oust-Blair plot after scandals

LONDON—POLITICAL SNIPING RAGED around British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Sunday as allies accused plotters of trying to oust him following a fortnight of scandals and disheartening local election results.

Blair's sweeping Cabinet reshuffle following Thursday's dismal poll showing failed to silence calls for him to quit.

Urging renewal, Finance Minister Gordon Brown—widely expected to be his successor—said a "stable and orderly transition" of power was required, and put the onus on Blair to name the day for his departure.

Blair has pledged not to stand for a fourth straight term in office at the next election, due by May 2010 at the latest.

But a growing band of Labor MPs want him to specify when he plans to step aside—soon.

The rebels are gathering signatures on a letter urging Blair to lay out his succession plans by July.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Brown is eager for the top job but refused to turn the screw on Blair directly.

"The vast majority of people want what Tony Blair wants himself, what he has said that he wants to achieve, and that is a stable and orderly transition," he told BBC television.

Asked if he knew when Blair was going to make way, Brown said: "No. Tony Blair has said himself a year ago that he wishes to play his part in organizing that stable and orderly transition.

"We don't actually know who's going to be leader of the Labor Party.

"I think people will look to him, and it's not essentially a matter for me, it's a matter for him and the Labor Party."

Brown stopped short of directly linking renewal with Blair's exit.

He added: "I'm determined that in the next stage of my political career I make sure that New Labor broadens its coalition so that we have got a wider group of support."

A growing body of MPs feels a revamped Labor requires Blair tendering his resignation.

Some 50 rebels have signed up to a draft letter, published in The Sunday Telegraph, which demands a timetable for a "dignified, orderly and efficient" leadership transition to be set out by July.

And a BBC radio survey of 104 Labor backbenchers found 52 said Blair should stand down within a year.

Blair loyalist Stephen Byers, a former transport minister, said plotting undermined the chances of a smooth handover of power.

"If we want to have an orderly transition, what we cannot have is the forced removal of Tony Blair as our leader," he told Sky News television.

"And for those people who are organizing a coup against him, they are playing a very dangerous game and they should stop."

New Home Secretary John Reid warned the plotters they were not going to win and risked "catastrophe."

Glenda Jackson, a longtime Labor rebel, attacked Blair loyalists, telling the domestic Press Association news agency: "Stephen Byers' comments graphically illustrate the attitude of the Blairite inner circle. *AFP*

BLAIR: Half of party mates want him out. AP

AHMADINEJAD

Iran president writes to Bush

TEHRAN—IRANIAN President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has written a letter to US President George W. Bush to "propose new ways" to resolve tensions, the Iranian government spokesperson told reporters Monday.

"President Ahmadinejad has written a letter to George Bush, which is to be handed to the Swiss Embassy," Gholam Hossein Elham told reporters.

It is the first time an Iranian president has been known to officially communicate with an American president since Washington and Tehran cut off diplomatic relations in 1980.

"In this letter, while analyzing the world situation and finding the roots of the problems, he has proposed new ways for getting out of the existing vulnerable world situation," the spokesperson said.

The United States and Iran are at loggerheads over Tehran's nuclear program which Washington suspects is a cover for ambitions to build atomic weapons.

Washington also accuses Iran of supporting "terrorist" groups across the Middle East region.

Washington has not had diplomatic relations with Iran since April 1980, following the seizure of the US Embassy in Tehran in 1979 in which 52 Americans were held for 444 days.

The Swiss government assumed the representation of US interests in Iran in 1981, and has since been acting as a conduit for messages between the two archenemies. *AFP*

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS
Committee on Disposal of Real Properties

INVITATION TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas invites all interested parties to bid for the following real estate properties:

	Location	TCT NO. New	TCT NO. Old	Area	Description	Recommended New Price
	METRO MANILA					
	CALOOCAN CITY					
	Banker's Village I					
1	Lot 56 People's Avenue	C-348012	298621	338	Residential Lot	676,000
	Banker's Village2					
2	Block 1 Lot 19, Bernardo Diapo St.	C-349904	297597	260	Residential Lot	520,000
3	Block 15 Lot 2, Bernardo Diapo St.	C-349638	293354	240	Residential Lot	480,000
4	Block 28 Lot 22, Isageni Campos St.	C-349637	297689	240	Residential Lot	480,000
	MAKATI CITY					
5	Grd. Floor, Trafalgar Plaza Condo 105 H. V. Dela Costa St., Salcedo Vill.	77909	68789	539.66	Commercial Condo unit	45,872,800
	MARIKINA CITY					
6	Lot 5-A Gregorio St., Sto. Niño	415424	280552	40	Residential lot w/ imp	88,000
7	Lot 5-B Gregorio St. Sto. Niño	415425	280553	40	Residential lot w/ imp	88,000
8	Lot 5-C Gregorio St., Sto. Niño	415426	280554	40	Residential lot w/ imp	88,000
9	Lot 5-D Gregorio St. Sto. Niño	415427	280555	40	Residential lot w/ imp	88,000
10	Lot 5-E Gregorio St., Sto. Niño	415428	280556	40	Residential lot w/ imp	88,000
11	Lot 5-F Gregorio St. Sto. Niño	415429	280557	40	Residential lot w/ imp	88,000
12	Lot 5-G Gregorio St., Sto. Niño	415430	280558	97	Residential lot w/ imp	213,400
13	Lot 5-H Gregorio St. Sto. Niño	415431	280559	40	Residential lot w/ imp	92,000
14	Lot 5-I Gregorio St., Sto. Niño	415432	280560	40	Residential lot w/ imp	92,000
15	Lot 5-J Gregorio St. Sto. Niño	415433	280561	50	Residential lot w/ imp	115,000
16	Lot 5-K Gregorio St., Sto. Niño	415434	280562	56	Residential lot w/ imp	128,800
	MUNTINLUPA CITY					
17	Ipil St. Brgy. Sucat	178488	9633	34,452	Res'l for subd. development	103,356,000
	QUEZON CITY					
18	7 Edsel St., West Fairview	N-233927	141140	400	Residential lot w/ imp	2,593,400
19	Unit A, Grnd Flr St. Francis Condo, Aurora	5392	612	275	Com'l condo w/ mezzanine	8,250,000
	LUZON					
	BATANGAS					
	Batangas City					
20	Meralco Road, Brgy. Banaba South	T-57114	T-49952	1,738	Residential lot	3,476,000
21	Meralco Road, Brgy. Banaba South	T-57115	T-49953	1,738	Residential lot	3,476,000
	Balayan					
22	Brgy. Palugo 1/	19 lots		8,699,263	Agricultural land	526,753,200
	Calaca					
23	Brgy. Talisay 2/	T-103222	T-93958	10,089	For beach resort development	5,044,500
24	Brgy. Talisay 3/	TP-3999	TP-3514	1,290	For beach resort development	1,200,000
25	Brgy. Sinisian	T-101391		12,558	Agro-Industrial lot	2,511,600
26	Brgy. Sinisian	T-101392		46,880	Agro-Industrial lot	9,376,000
27	Brgy. Sinisian	T-101393		48,096	Agro-Industrial lot	9,619,600
28	Brgy. Sinisian	T-101394		40,400	Agro-Industrial lot	8,080,000
29	Brgy. Sinisian	T-101395		40,333	Agro-Industrial lot	8,066,600
30	Brgy. Sinisian	T-101396		40,364	Agro-Industrial lot	8,072,800
	Lipa City					
31	Bolbok Road, Brgy. Bolbok	70417	T-156066	17,775	Residential Lot	3,555,000
32	Tibig Road, Brgy. Tibig	T-89939	T-156067	1,040	Residential Lot	1,872,000
33	Provincial Road, Brgy. Sampaguita	T-92250	T-156068	1,498	Com'l/ Res'l Lot w/ Imps.	3,067,000
34	Provincial Road, Brgy. Sampaguita	T-85817	T-156069	3,323	Res'l w/30 sq.m. imp	3,040,700
35	Provincial Road, Brgy. Sampaguita	T-86846	T-156070	1,512	Residential lot	1,360,800
36	Provincial Road, Brgy. Sampaguita	97192	T-156071	1,359	Residential lot	1,223,100
37	Bo. Rizal	144073	104283	6,137	Agricultural lot	845,250
38	*Juanita Homes Subd., Bolbok*	16 lots	160 to 163 sq.m.		Residential lot	P 700 per sq.m
	Rosario					
39	Lot 601 Pob. Brgy. D	T-116223	T-99279	380	Res'l/Com'l w/ imp	3,010,000
40	C. Alday St. Brgy. Namuco (Pob. Brgy. B)	T-116233	T-49820	209	Res'l w/ 93 sq.m. Imp	492,000
41	Lot 6-B Poblacion Brgy. D	T-116230	T-68856	365	Residential lot	1,456,000
42	Lot 8929-C-6 Brgy. San Ignacio	T-116234	T-78568	451	Res'l w/ 106 sq.m. Imp	90,000
	San Pascual					
43	L10 Goldland RoyaleVillas, San Antonio	T-116228	T-83531	81	Residential lot w/ imp	146,000
	BULACAN					
	Guiguinto					
44	Tabang	T-196599	T-294346	875	Residential/Commercial	4,375,000
45	Tabang	T-196600	T-294347	755	Residential/Commercial	3,775,000
46	Tabang	T-196601	T-260037	964	Residential/Commercial	4,820,000
47	Tabang	T-196602	T-284235	503	Residential/Commercial	2,515,000
	Marilao					
	Divine Mercy Subdivision					
48	Lot 1, Block 9	T-451760	T-442891	226	Residential lot	565,000
49	Lot 2, Block 9	T-451761	T-442892	240	Residential lot	600,000
50	Lot 28-A	T-451762	T-442894	120	Residential lot	300,000
	Pulilan					
51	Poblacion	T-196596	P-6211	1,042	Residential lot	2,500,800
52	Poblacion	T-196594	T-16882	407	Commercial w/ bank building	3,210,000
53	Poblacion	T-196595	T-16883	1,043	Residential lot	2,503,200
	San Ildefonso					
54	Cagayan Valley Road, Brgy. Maasim	T-207386	T-103377	1,000	Residential lot	840,000
	CAVITE					
	Bacoor					
55	Tirona Hway & Rd Lot 4, Habay	T-1024190	T-702540	250	Com'l - bank site	4,917,000
	Bacoor Business Center					
56	Unit 201	CT-1478	CT 33	34.94	Com'l. condo unit	366,870
57	Unit 209	CT-1479	CT 41	28.25	Com'l. condo unit	296,625
58	Unit 213	CT-1480	CT 45	28.27	Com'l. condo unit	296,835
59	Unit 303	CT-1481	CT 55	33.23	Com'l. condo unit	348,915
60	Unit 309	CT-1482	CT 61	28.25	Com'l. condo unit	296,625
	General Trias					
61	Malou St., Stateland Hills Subd., Manggahan	1105559	602098	687	Residential lot	550,000
	LAGUNA					
	Cabuyao					
62	Lot 2 Blk 1, St. Joseph Subd., Butong	T-496258	428516	40	Res'l w/ 20.8 sq.m imp.	167,360
	San Pablo City					
63	Angeles Heights Subd., San Gabriel	T-53842	35060	241	Residential lot	368,870
64	*Andal Subd.Brgy. San Roque*	21 lots	120 to 162 sq.m.		Residential lot	P1500 - 1,600/sqm
	LA UNION					
	Aringay					
65	Lot 4452-B, Bo. San Eugenio	T-5119	T-50482	6,345	Res'l with 2 bldg imps.	5,957,080
	San Juan					
66	Lot 5, Blk. 10, Montemar Vill. Brgy. III Norte	T-29873	T-5118	240	Residential lot	600,000
	LUCENA					
67	L 10, B 1, St. Joseph St, St. Michael Subd.	T-111491	111486	187	Residential	334,000
	NUEVA ECIJA					
	Cabanatuan City					
68	Brgy. San Isidro	T-77007	T-122517	659	Com'l/ Res'l w 70 sq.m. imp.	1,347,000
69	Brgy. San Isidro	T-77098	T-122518	659	Com'l/ Res'l w 253sq m. imp.	1,704,000
70	Brgy. San Isidro	T-77096	T-122519	301	Res'l w/ 146 sq.m. imp.	1,281,300
	San Antonio					
71	Purok 2, Brgy. Julo	NT-165602	NT-305923	527	Res'l w/ 110 sq.m. imp	666,000
	San Jose City					
72	L5/B12 Encarnacion Subd	24356	21126	200	Residential lot w/ imp	400,000
	Christianville Subd. San Jose City					
73	Block 21 Lot 1, Rd Lot 9	24345	16864	243	Residential Lot	461,700
74	Block 21 Lot 2, Road Lot 9	24346	16865	210	Residential Lot	336,000
75	Block 21 Lot 3, Road Lot 10	24347	16866	207	Residential Lot	310,500
76	Block 21 Lot 4, Road Lot 9	24348	16867	249	Residential Lot	308,400
77	Block 21 Lot 5, Road Lot 10	24349	16868	319	Residential Lot	446,600
78	Block 21 Lot 6, Road Lot 10	24350	16869	176	Residential Lot	246,400
79	Block 21 Lot 7, Road Lot 10	24351	16870	257	Residential Lot	385,500
80	Block 21 Lot 8, Road Lot 10	24352	16871	281	Residential Lot	393,400
81	Block 21 Lot 9, Road Lot 10	24353	16872	268	Residential Lot	462,400
	PAMPANGA					
	Angeles City					
82	Lot 655-A, Narciso St., Josefa Subd	118917	83279	429	Residential lot w/ imp	379,000
	Quirino St, Plaridel Subd.					
83	Lot 2-A	118918	83943	210	Residential lot	571,000
84	Lot 2-C	118920	83945	210	Residential lot	399,000
	QUEZON					
85	Maharlika Hiway, Gibanga, Sariaya 4/	T-411104-05	411100 & 01	23,480.00	Residential/Commercial	5,452,000
	PANGASINAN					
	Dagupan					
86	Lot 3, Mayombo, Arzadon Compound 5/	78478	51667	1,135	Res'l/Comm'l with 4 bldg. Imps.	6,615,847
	RIZAL					
	Angono					
	Grandvalley Subdivision					
87	Block 26 Lot 28, Phase 4	665926	589465	276	Residential lot	828,000
88	Block 26 Lot 29, Phase 4	665927	589466	249	Residential lot	672,300
89	Don M. Santos Ave.Ext.	662775	634968	180	Residential lot	540,000
	Antipolo City					
90	L 13, B 3, Sitio El Dorado, Brgy. San Jose	R-13182	306859	364	Residential lot w/ imp	582,000
91	L 16 B 8, Raja Agu St., Bankers Vill 3	R-13184	305844	380	Residential lot	893,000
92	L 16, B 8, Kay Ugat, Brgy Cupang	R-13186	305848	300	Residential lot	210,000
93	Lot 2, Sitio Gala Pantay, San Jose	R-11137	303675	11,623	Agricultural lot	1,469,000
94	Lot 9-B Everly Hills Subd. Cupang	R-11133	305847	570	Residential lot	399,000
95	Glen Oaks Subdivision	369 lots		633,933	Res'l for subd development	136,153,400
	Aries II Subdivision					
96	Block 8 Lot 73, Road Lot 6	R-5163	283629	240	Residential lot	168,000
97	Block 8 Lot 71, Road Lot 6	R-5162	283630	240	Residential lot	168,000
	Bankers Village II					
98	Block 2 Lot 11 cor. Lawin & Kalapati Sts.	R-5154	294850	403	Residential lot	1,007,500
99	Block 8 Lot 27 Iloilo St.	R-11136	305952	425	Residential lot	998,750
	Mala Alta Subdivision					
100	Furlopino St.	R-2097	318137	203	Residential lot	1,116,500
101	Venice St.	R-2092	318191	105	Residential lot	577,500
	San Mateo					
102	Block 1 Lot 2, Phase 3, Bankers Village	434031	306614	233	Residential lot	699,000
	Taytay					
103	Pinesville Subd., Brgy. Dolores	663478	629197	273	Residential lot	464,000
	TARLAC					
	Tarlac City					
104	L3, B29, Honeysuckel Dr. Las Haciendas Luisita	T-379924	322215	498	Residential Lot	1,494,000
	Robertsville City, Matatalaib					
105	Lot 7 Block 9	357345	305338	38.5	Res'l with 52.4 sqmimp	240,470
106	Lot 1 Block 1	357353	315053	38	Res'l with 61.1 sq.m. imp	490,810
107	Lot 2 Block 19	33748	316234	52.5	Residential w/ imp.	275,625
108	Lot 12 Block 17	357351	316236	52.5	Residential w/ imp.	163,125
109	Lot 11 Block 19	357347-A	316239	52.5	Residl w/ 37.5 sqm imrpvt.	307,125
110	Lot 3 Block 19	357350	316251	52.5	Residl w/ 37.5 sqm imrpvt.	275,625
111	Lot 1 Block 26	357318	T-316230	52.5	Residential w/ imp.	163,125
112	Lot 4 Block 26	357319	T-316231	52.5	Residential w/ imp.	163,125
	Concepcion					
113	Provincial Rd., Brgy. Green Village	T-378767	314491	3,000	Commercial w/ Imp.	13,521,574
	VISAYAS					
	BACOLOD CITY					
114	L11 to 14, B 11 Villa Valderama Subd., Bata	T-288316-19	T-232403-06	2,999	Residential w/ imps.	7,541,500
	ILOILO					
	Mandurriao					
115	23 Mirasol St., Corville Subd., Abeto-Mirasol	T-151301	T-151273	325	Residential with Imps.	925,700
	Jaro					
116	L51, B11, 8th Lane, Lowa-an Vill., Balantang 6/	T-151300	T-151272	560	Residential lot	870,000
117	Commission Civil St., Brgy. Benedicto	T-151298	T-151296	687	Mixed res'l/com'l w/ fence	4,819,000
	TACLOBAN					
118	Lot 2863-B, Caibaan	T-7239	5209	340	Res'l w/ 2 Imps.	590,000
	MINDANAO					
	DAVAO DEL NORTE					
	Bermudez Golden Plains Subd.					
119	Lot 12, Blk 26 Molave St.	T-185405	143125	120	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	142,000
120	Lot 12, Blk 28, Nato St.	T-185410	146592	85	Res'l w/ 30 sq.m. Imp	111,000
121	Lot 31, Blk. 29, Nagmit St.	T-185409	143130	110	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	136,000
122	Lot 29, Blk. 29, Nagmit St.	T-190393	143131	110	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	136,000
123	Lot 26, Blk. 29, Narik St.	T-190388	146483	110	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	136,000
124	Lot 3, Blk. 26, Neem St.	T-190391	146888	126	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	146,000
125	Lot 5, Blk 16, Mahogany St.	T-190392	143129	120	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	142,000
126	Lot 13, Blk. 23, Narra St.	T-190386	146481	91	Res'l w/ 30 sq m. Imp	116,000
127	Lot 9, Blk. 24, Salisi St.	T-190387	146482	100	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	130,000
128	Lot 27, Blk. 16, Mahogany St.	T-190390	146882	125	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	145,000
129	Lot 22, Blk. 26, Molave St.	T-185407	143127	120	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	142,000
130	Lot 84, Blk. 23, Mahogany St.	T-185408	143128	120	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	142,000
131	Lot 50, Blk. 23, Mahogany St.	T-185406	143126	90	Res'l w/ 30 sq.m. imp	114,000
132	Lot 7, Blk. 20, Narra St.	T-190389	146484	100	Res'l w/ 36 sq.m imp	130,000
	DAVAO CITY					
133	*Landco-PDCP Corporate Centre*	34 units	49.85 to 198.77 sq.m.		Commercial Condo Units	P44,000 - 50,000 per sq m.
	J. P. Laurel Avenue, Pryce Business Park	27 units	12.50 sqm each		Parking Space	P30,000/ sq.m

1/ Inclusive of approximately 87,062 sq.m. easements along rivers and creeks. With 300 structures occupied by about 2,000 people.
2/ inclusive of approximately 222.50 sq.m. traversed by the barangay road
3/ inclusive of approximately 219.20 sq.m. traversed by the barangay road
4/ Inclusive of 766 sq.m. legal easement along Lusacan Creek
5/ With case pending before the Court of Appeals. Net usable area is 1,078 sq.m.
6/ A portion of an adjacent residential building has encroached upon the property

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished bid forms enclosed in sealed envelopes shall be on **24 May 2006, 10:00 A.M.**, at **Rm. 313, Five-Storey Bldg, BSP Complex, A.Mabini St., Malate, Manila**. All bids will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission of bids at 5th Flr, Executive Business Center, Five-Storey Bldg, BSP Complex.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

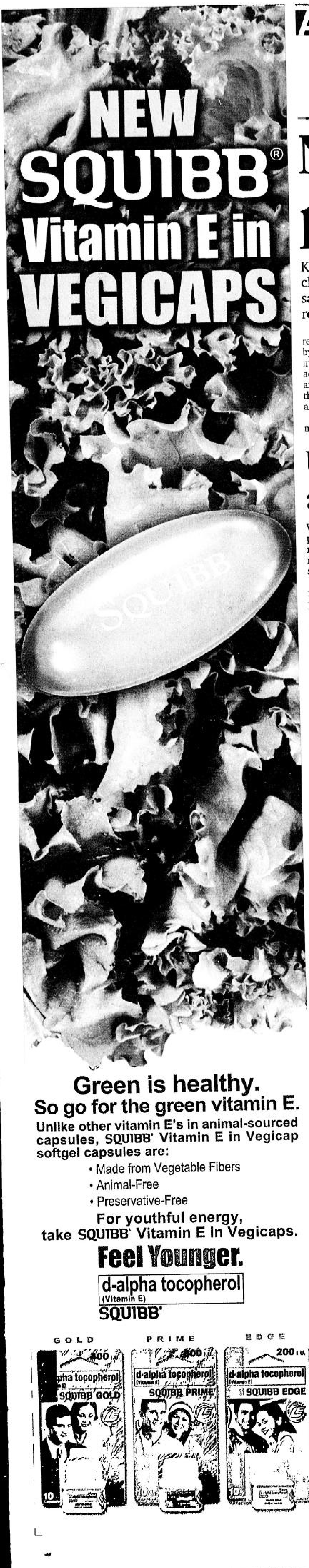
1. The Buyer is deemed to have inspected the property.
2. The sale of the properties shall be "As-Is, Where-Is" and the winning bidder shall undertake the responsibility to acquire and maintain peaceful possession and enjoyment of the property without seeking the assistance of the BSP.
3. The BSP reserves the right to withdraw any or all of the properties offered for sale at any time and to reject any or all bids or to waive any infirmity found therein, or to accept such offers as will be considered advantageous to the BSP.
4. Prices are subject to change without prior notice.
5. The Committee will immediately start accepting offers for negotiation, in the event of a failed bidding, and will continue to accept offers through the Asset Management Department. However, the Committee may at its discretion, elect to conclude the negotiation immediately after failure of bidding whenever there is a highest complying offeror ascertained.
6. Offerors at the Public Bidding must tender a BID BOND equivalent to 10% of the offered price and offerors under the negotiated sale basis must submit an EARNEST MONEY equivalent to 10% of the negotiated price either in CASH or CASHIER's/MANAGER's CHECK payable to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which shall form part of the consideration once the offer is approved.

Complete description of the properties, rules and regulations on the bidding procedures and the prescribed bid forms are available for a minimal fee of P50.00 at the Asset Management Department, Rm. 313, Five-Storey Bldg. through the following:

	Direct Line	Trunk Line: 524-70-11
Juliet Villanueva	523-34-86	loc. 2857
Joannah T. Rosales	523-34-86	loc. 2857
Cynthia A. Sarmento	404-21-14	2857
Naida N. Santos	524-34-20	2381
Arthur M. Montalbo	524-34-20	2381
Judith Cordeta	530-56-36	2235

(Sgd.) **MELPIN A. GONZAGA**
Committee Chairman

(PDI - May 9, 2006)



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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Nepal's new government purges all the king's men

KATMANDU—NEPAL'S NEW GOVERNMENT IS clearing out all the king's men, recalling ambassadors and accepting the resignation of dozens of royally appointed officials.

The Cabinet on Sunday night revoked all appointments made by King Gyanendra since parliament was dissolved in 2002. In addition, 12 royally appointed ambassadors including those to the United States, India, Britain and China, were recalled.

The decisions were implemented with "immediate effect," Finance Minister Ram Sharan Mahat told AFP.

Gyanendra was forced to end his absolute rule of the Himalayan nation last month, after weeks of massive protests crippled Nepal, killing 19 protesters and injuring hundreds.

Opposition parties in concert with rebel Maoists claimed a "people's victory" over the monarch, and the new government and rebels have both declared ceasefires and outlined plans to form a constituent assembly, a body to amend the constitution and clip the powers of the king.

The attorney general, heads of the national planning and women's commissions, and the chairmen of the state-run television station and news agency have all already resigned, the Rising Nepal reported Monday.

In parliament on Sunday, MPs demanded the resignation of the chief justice and the suspension of the heads of the security forces.

To date, the new interim government has appointed only a core Cabinet of seven members who replaced dozens of the king's ministers.

Scores of hastily vacated positions in the administration remain unfilled.

However, with fears widespread of a return to the cronyism that has long plagued Nepal, the head of the national journalists association warned that new government appointments should be made on merit, not connections. *AFP*

US solons concerned about Bush's CIA pick

WASHINGTON—TOP US LAWMAKERS EXpressed concern Sunday over the expected nomination of Gen. Michael Hayden as the next CIA chief, setting up a possible congressional showdown with the White House.

President George W. Bush is expected to name Hayden on Monday as his choice to replace Porter Goss, who unexpectedly resigned Friday, at the helm of the Central Intelligence Agency, according to US media.

Both Republican and opposition Democratic legislators voiced concern about putting a military officer in charge of the agency instead of a civilian, and cited Hayden's support for a controversial domestic spying program as a worry.

"Bottom line, I do believe he's the wrong person, the wrong place, at the wrong time," Rep. Pete Hoekstra, a Republican who heads the House intelligence committee, told Fox News Sunday.

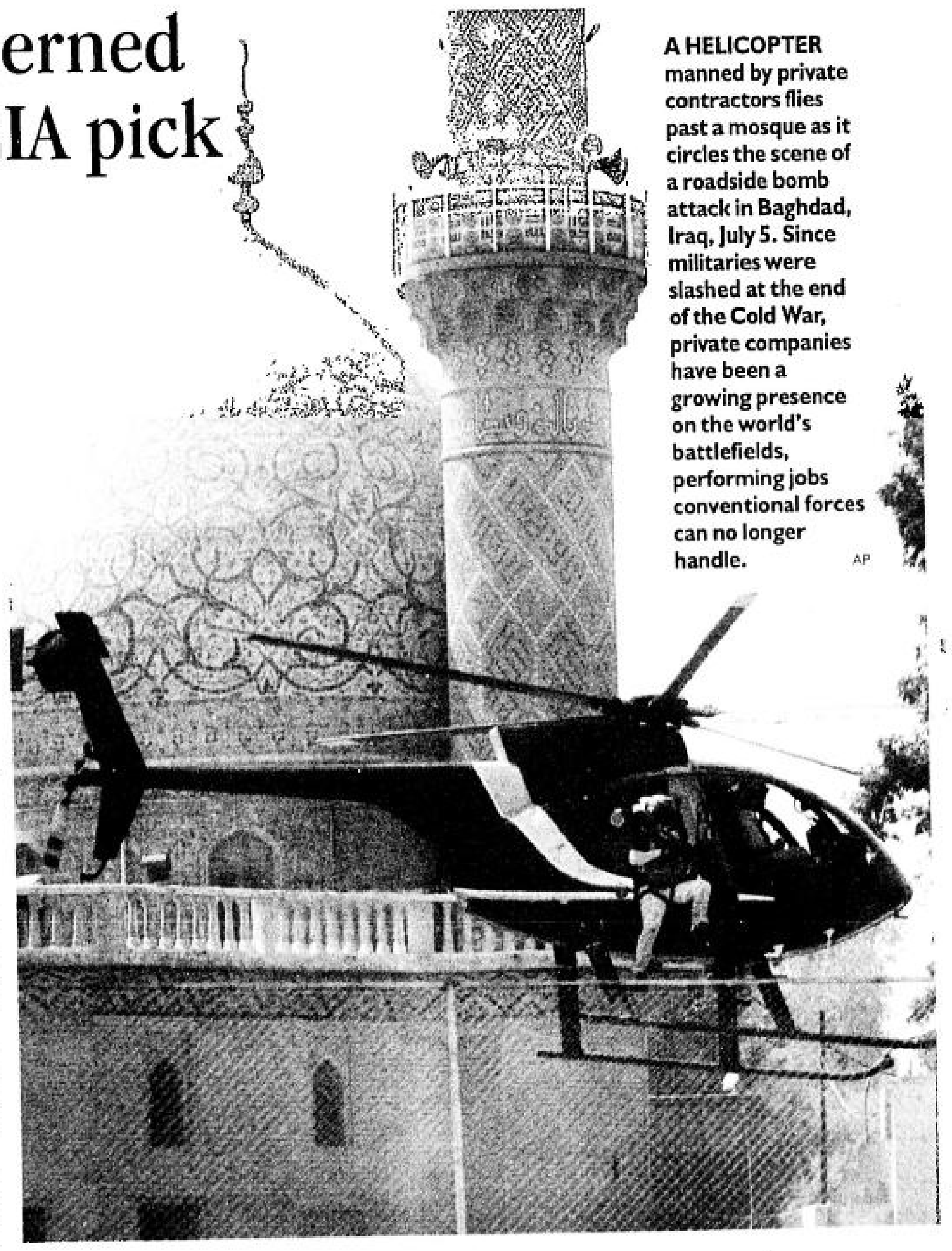
"We should not have a military person leading a civilian agency at this time," Hoekstra said.

"The danger of having the military take over intelligence is that the military has a very different perspective on the world," he said. "They're worried about today and wars and threats to the United States in the short term and how we might respond militarily."

Republican Sen. Pat Roberts, chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said Hayden could ease those concerns by resigning as an Air Force general and naming civilians as his deputies.

Still, Roberts, who praised the general as an expert on intelligence, would not say whether he would vote for Hayden's nomination. His committee must endorse the nomination and send it to the full Senate for approval.

"I'm not in a position to say that I am for General Hayden and will vote for him," he told CNN. *AFP*



A HELICOPTER manned by private contractors flies past a mosque as it circles the scene of a roadside bomb attack in Baghdad, Iraq, July 5. Since militaries were slashed at the end of the Cold War, private companies have been a growing presence on the world's battlefields, performing jobs conventional forces can no longer handle. AP

WORLDBRIEFS

Last American to see Titanic sinking dies

BOSTON—The last American to remember seeing hundreds of fellow passengers drown in the icy North Atlantic when the Titanic sank 94 years ago has died at age 99, a funeral home spokesperson said on Sunday. Lillian Gertrud Asplund was returning home to the United States from Sweden with her parents and four brothers when the ship, believed to be "unsinkable," struck an iceberg on April 14, 1912 and sank a few hours later on April 15. A US Senate report said 1,523 people were killed. Asplund died at home, a spokesperson for the Nordgren Memorial Chapel, in Worcester, Massachusetts, confirmed. A lifetime resident of Massachusetts, Asplund was an intensely private person who shunned all publicity surrounding the disaster, one of the worst peacetime maritime accidents. The funeral home spokesperson said she instructed relatives to keep quiet about what she saw and even asked that the disaster not be mentioned in her obituary. The two last Titanic survivors are said to be living in England but both women were infants when they were rescued and have no memories of that disastrous night, Titanic experts say. Asplund lost more than half her family in the accident when her father and three brothers stayed behind as crewmen rushed the young girl, her younger brother and their mother into a lifeboat. *Reuters*

ASPLUND AP

Car bomb attacks kill 16 in Iraq

BAGHDAD—Car bombs killed at least 16 people and injured dozens Sunday in Baghdad and a Shiite holy city, casting doubt on US hopes that formation of a new government alone would provide a quick end to the country's violence. At least 26 others were killed or found dead Sunday, including a US Marine mortally wounded in the insurgent bastion of Anbar province in western Iraq, police and the US military said. Some of the victims appeared to have been abducted and killed by sectarian "death squads" that target members of rival religious communities. The dead included three brothers whose charred bodies were found before dawn in Baghdad's Dora district, a mixed Sunni-Shiite area and one of the city's most violent. The deadliest single attack occurred at midmorning when a suicide driver detonated his vehicle near an Iraqi army patrol leaving its base in the Sunni Arab neighborhood of Azamiyah, killing 10 people and injuring 15, most of them Iraqi soldiers, police Lt. Col. Falah al-Mohammedawi said. *AP*

Suharto recovering after surgery

JAKARTA—Ailing former Indonesian dictator Suharto was recovering Monday from surgery to halt intestinal bleeding, the head of his medical team said. "On the first day post-surgery, the conditions of Haji Muhammad Suharto are good. (He is) fully conscious and shows stable vital signs," said Mardjo Soebandiono, who heads the team of doctors treating the former leader. The 84-year-old underwent surgery Sunday evening until early Monday at state-run Pertamina hospital in south Jakarta, where he has been treated in the past. "There is no longer any bleeding found," he said. *AFP*

Russia hits back at Cheney criticism

MOSCOW—RUSSIA HIT BACK Monday at US and European Union criticism, most recently voiced by US Vice President Dick Cheney, that it was using energy as a political weapon, and said it was time the West came to terms with Russia's progress as a market economy.

"We are deeply puzzled by recent commentary in the West that distorts Russian energy policies," Russian Energy and Industry Minister Viktor Khristenko wrote in Monday's edition of the British business daily Financial Times.

"The truth of the matter is that Russia has moved away from Soviet-era arrangements of subsidizing the energy prices of our neighbors and turned to market-based pricing mechanisms," Khristenko wrote.

The article appeared after Cheney used a speech in Vilnius on Thursday to warn the Kremlin against rolling back democracy and using its vast oil and gas resources as "tools of manipulation or blackmail" to further its political aims.

Russia briefly cut off gas supplies to Ukraine in January amid a price dispute. Supplies to European clients further downstream were also disrupted as a result, sparking concerns about Russia's reliability as an energy supplier.

Khristenko said Russia's policies on energy in particular and on market and democratic reform in general were "consistently misinterpreted." *AFP*

PRINCE WILLIAM'S GIRL
Kate Middleton, the girlfriend of Britain's Prince William, leaves St. Cyriac's Church, in Lacock, Wiltshire, England, after attending the wedding of Laura Parker Bowles, daughter of Prince Charles' wife, and Harry Lopes at a private ceremony, May 6. AP

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SPORTS

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Miller, Ritualo, 4 others traded

Alaska gets TNT's 2004 MVP plus Ferriols; Phone Pals take Renren, Allado

By Jasmine W. Payo

THREE MARQUEE NAMES, INCLUDING 2004 MOST VALuable Player Willie Miller, were part of a blockbuster six-player trade completed by three teams yesterday in a development that could well tilt the balance of power in the Philippine Basketball Association.

Talk 'N Text acquired Don Allado from Alaska and Renren Ritualo from Air21, while Miller will be coach Tim Cone's newest Ace at Alaska.

The Phone Pals shipped Miller and John Ferriols to Alaska, which gave up the 6-foot-5 Allado and one of its first-round selections in the PBL rookie draft in August.

Young role player Leo Avenido, plus Talk 'N Text's first round picks in the next two rookie drafts next year, went to Air21 in exchange for the 6-foot-1 gunslinger Ritualo and veteran guard Patrick Fran.

Fran, however, will be put in a waiver to conform to a league policy involving players traded back to their former teams.

This will be Miller's third team after joining Red Bull straight from the defunct Metropolitan Basketball Association. He won the MVP while helping the Phone Pals win their first regular conference title two years ago under the resigned Joel Banal.

Allado and Ritualo will be suiting up for their second teams in the league, and their addition to the already formidable Talk 'N Text lineup has made the Phone Pals almost unbeatable on paper.

MILLER: To Alaska Aces

RITUALO: To Talk 'N Text Phone Pals

FERRIOLS: To Alaska Aces

ALLADO: To Talk 'N Text Phone Pals

"We needed to turn things around," said Talk 'N Text coach Derrick Pumaren, whose Phone Pals are at 5-7 in the ongoing Gran Matador-PBA Philippine Cup.

"It so happens that we were presented with this opportunity, so we took advantage of it. We needed a pure shooter in Ren-Ren and a big man with ceiling in Don."

The Phone Pals have indeed grown taller, with Asi Taulava and back-up Harvey Carey already in the lineup. Talk 'N Text also has a player on the injured list—6-foot-6 rookie Anthony Washington.

The arrival of Miller at Alaska will give the Aces one of the finest backcourts in the league in tandem with Mike Cortez.

"Miller will add quickness to our backcourt," said Alaska team manager Joaqui Trillo. "We could use some of his quickness and instant offense. Ferriols will be role-playing for us. We like his lefty jump shot from the perimeter."

Air21 team manager Lito Alvarez said the release of Ritualo, one of only three players this conference who averages at least 20 points per game, is part of Air21's evolving team strategy.

"The core of the team will now be (KG) Canaleta," said Alvarez. "The team owner wants (to employ) pressure defense all the way, and Ritualo is a known scorer."

"We weren't shortchanged," Alvarez added. "Avenido will also serve as back-up (at guard) to (Wynne) Arboleda."

ASIAN F3 ROUND 3

Sy completes handsome hat trick

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—TYSON SY STUCK TO a plan that had worked twice to perfection to complete an amazing hat-trick in the first leg Sunday of the 2006 Asian Formula Three Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Another young gun, Dado Peña, finally clinched a podium spot as Filipino drivers finished 1-3 in the third round of the series opener.

Showing he had successfully put last year's heartbreak season behind him, Sy pulled away from the field as early as the fifth lap and checked in first in 16 minutes, 35.806 seconds in the blistering heat.

"My plan was to go straight and not to look back," said Sy, who registered his fastest lap time of 1:30.051 in Lap 7.

The 18-year-old Speedtech Asia ace earned his third straight 20 points and, counting the 40 he won after sweeping the first two rounds, will go into the next leg in Zhuhai, China, next month with a perfect 60 points.

That will be hard to top considering that Irishman John O'Hara, who salvaged second for the round, is skipping the China and Indonesia races.

"This will be my last race (before China and Indonesia)," said O'Hara, adding that Indon Moreno Soeprapto may be tapped to take his place on the Aran Racing Team of Ireland.

O'Hara, runner-up to Australian driver Christian Jones in 2004 and Indonesian Ananda Mikola last year, started 12th on the grid after spinning out of the second race early Sunday. He steadily gained ground and eventually finished second, 5.856 seconds slower than Sy.

AF3 Corp. chair Ed Peña said O'Hara will be back in the last three rounds in November, with Jones looming as the biggest threat to Sy and Dado Peña in China. Mikola competes anew in the Indonesia races.

Peña, 18, drove patiently and wisely, learning a lesson from his wild spin in the first leg Saturday that took him out of the initial race. Peña's persis-

SY/ A22

2006 Asian F3 Series

Third Round
(Batangas Racing Circuit)

1. **Tyson Sy** Philippines	16:35.806
2. **John O'Hara** Ireland	16:41.662
3. **Dado Peña** Philippines	16:44.397
4. **Ali Jackson** Ireland	16:45.264
5. **James Winslow** England	16:45.789

Negros booters stall MPL

GAMES TODAY
8 a.m.—Masbate vs Davao; Cebu vs Bukidnon
2:30 p.m.—Iligan vs South Cotabato; Iloilo vs Neg. Oriental
4 p.m.—Cagayan-Misamis vs Neg. Occidental; Rizal vs MPL

SAN CARLOS CITY—Host Negros Occidental held favorite Muntinlupa-Las Piñas-Parañaque to a 1-all draw yesterday at the start of the inaugural PFF-National Girls' Under-17 Football Championships at the SJRI ball fields here.

Three other Visayas teams thrived under sweltering conditions and notched lopsided victories.

Local girl Mara Sabanal, 15, displayed a fine finishing touch, pouncing on Mariane Narciso's inch-perfect through ball with a right-footed low shot just inside the box to shove the hosts ahead, 1-0, in the 5th minute.

But skipper April Cuenca drew level for MPL six minutes later, beating goalkeeper, Misty Marce, from close range.

"We are satisfied with the result but we have to improve in the next two matches if we want to make it to the

NEGROS/ A23

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NTCC golf features Isuzu Skills Challenge

By Jong Arcano

PARTICIPANTS IN THE MUCH-AWAITED National Tournament of Club Champions presented by HSBC and INQUIRER Golf will also be gunning for prizes in the Isuzu Skills Challenge which will spice up the main event at the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club in Gen. Trias, Cavite.

The Isuzu Skills Challenge will be a big test for the 52 entries in the men's and ladies' divisions as they gauge the strength of their driving, pitching, blasting and putting.

Prizes donated by Isuzu will be awarded to the winners in the four categories of the challenge, which will be held at the giant driving range of Eagle Ridge right after the first round on May 15.

There are 25 players in the men's division and 26 in the ladies' side.

Serving as the main prizes are trips to the HSBC Match Play in Wentworth, England, for the men's champion and to the HSBC LPGA Match Play in New Jersey, United States, for the ladies winner.

The other sponsors of the 2006 NTCC are Sta. Lucia Realty, Callaway as official apparel, Titleist as official ball, Microtel as official hotel, Travel Club, Pacific Air Media, Platonic as official hole-in-one sponsor and PAL as official carrier.

Korean and Japanese expatriates, including Japan's former national champion Yasushi Kita of Orchard, join local champions in the five-day event. Also in the field is the husband-and-wife tandem of Rodel and Lyn Mangulabnan who will be carrying the colors of Royal Northwoods of Bulacan.

Jungolfers in the lineup are Miko Yee, Cyna Rodriguez, Kathleen Uy and Katya dela Cruz.

NCR corners first 4 golds; record falls

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NAGA CITY (VIA BAYAN TEL)—**POWERED BY top gymnast Mage Wagan, National Capital Region claimed the first four gold medals at stake, even as Calabarzon's Nina Malinao felled the first Palarong Pambansa benchmark in athletics as action heated up yesterday at the Metro Naga Sports Complex here.**

But before the day was through, 12-year-old Richard Maulion of Mimaropa (Mindoro-Marinduque-Romblon-Palawan) shared the spotlight when he became the first double gold winner in ruling the boys' long jump and triple jump.

The 13-year-old Wagan topped the ribbon, hoop, rope and ball events to take the individual all-around gold even as NCR took the team event in rhythmic gymnastics Sunday night at the University of Nueva Caceres.

It was actually an all-NCR show in gymnastics as the Big City bets swept the medals in the individual all-around with Bleau Berry Gulfan and Rachelle Astillar taking the silver and bronze medals in the high school event.

In the elementary side, Rizza Desiree Garcia grabbed the gold in the all-round individual elementary, besting NCR teammates Gia Galvez and Myla Rodriguez, who settled for second and third places. NCR also claimed the team gold.

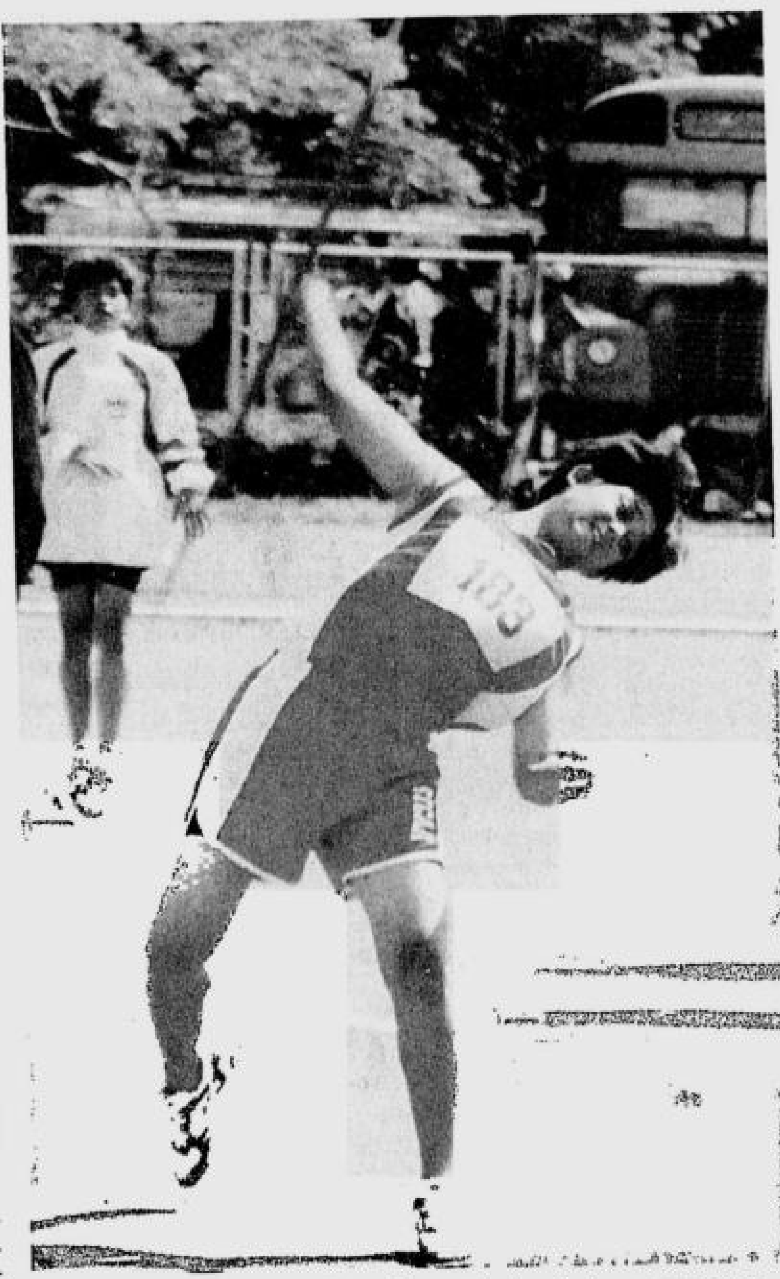
The 11-year-old Malinao, a fifth-grader from Quezon Elementary School, threw 38.95 meters en route to the elementary girls javelin title.

She bettered the 34.94m record set by Julie Ann Diaz of Western Visayas during the 1998 Palaro in Bacolod City.

Malinao achieved that feat on her very first try. Cagayan Valley's Ma. Florisa Batarina heaved 34.22m and Bicol's Jamseil Candelaria threw 33.98m to place second and third, respectively.

Mimaropa also produced its first gold when Maulion reigned supreme in the boys' long jump with a 5.79m effort on his second attempt. Maulion, the current record holder in the triple jump, said he could have done better if he had not competed in the 110 hurdles in the morning.

Though his triple jump effort was 0.43m shorter than his 2005 Palaro record, Maulion managed to post 12.05m on his sixth and last attempt to take his second gold medal. Central Visayas' Jeffrey Magkilat finished second with 11.41m.



CALABARZON'S Nina Malinao throws the javelin to a new record distance.

NINO JESUS Y. ORBETA, PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Sy strikes, completes handsome hat trick

From page A21

tence earned him third place at 16:44.397, one rung higher than his fourth-place finish in the second leg earlier Sunday.

With his Saturday crash with fellow Filipino Pepon Marave in mind, Peña, driving for Team Goddard, safely avoided a two-car collision at the first turn of the fifth lap involving Dillon Battistini of England and Ali Jackson of Ireland.

Battistini miscalculated the turn and touched wheels with Jackson, their cars blocking the path of James Winslow of England, who was then running a strong third.

This enabled O'Hara to zoom past them and start his pursuit of Sy.

Peña also benefited from the mishap, veering away to finish a solid third.

He added 12 points to his 10 points earlier in the day for a fourth-running 22 points in the series backed by PLDT myDSL, PLDT myPAD, Yokohama Tires, Lima City Hotel, Denso Spark Plugs, Big Shot Billiards, Suzuki, Oxy Enhanced Water, Tuason Racing School, Ford and Mossimo. Race enthusiasts can log on to www.asianf3.net for regular updates.

Battistini of JA Motorsports never recovered and finished eighth for the round, although he remained in second overall with 34 points, two points ahead of Winslow who finished fifth.

Jackson, making his initial foray in AF3 racing, claimed fourth and improved his total to 21 points in a tie with 6th placer Soeprapto of Speedtech Asia.

Another Indon, Bagoes Hermanto of R&W Racing, finished seventh while Marave of Shell Helix Kinetic PCSO, the 2002 champion, came in ninth, followed Hermanto's brother, Satrio, and JP Tuason of Tuason Racing School.

Satrio Hermanto topped the Promotions class, followed by Tuason and lady driver Gaby dela Merced who finished 12th overall, just ahead of fellow lady driver Michele Bumgarner who stalled on the grid in the first lap and completed just 11 laps.

Valencia battles Taguig quint

STANDINGS	W	L
North Division		
Bacchus/Harbour	4	2
Batang Tagaytay	4	3
Forward Taguig	3	2
Spring-Pñaque	2	3
Pangasinan	2	5
Laguna-S. Rosa	0	6
South Division		
Ozamiz Cotta	5	0
Iligan Crusaders	5	3
North Cotabato	5	3
Pagadian Explorers	4	3
Valencia	2	3
Iloilo Warriors	1	4

VISITING VALENCIA TRIES TO HALT its three-game losing skid in the 2006 Guerrero Brandy-NBC national basketball championship when it plays Forward Taguig at 5 p.m. today at the CP Tinga gym in Taguig City.

The Golden Harvest cagers of Mayor Jose Galario Jr. are expected to encounter stiff opposition from Mayor Freddie Tinga's boys, who will definitely get a lot of hometown support.

The Golden Harvest started with two straight wins, but dropped its next three games. Coach Arvin Martinez said he's not pushing the panic button yet.

"We always tend to make the opposing team jump the gun on us early and play catch-up the rest of the way," said Martinez.

Valencia pins its hopes on 2004 NBC Find of the Year Julius Navales and 2005 Rookie of the Year Eliazar Berami to help get it back on track.

Valencia, though, will be faced by a team laden with ex-pros and commercial players in the lone match of the tournament sponsored by Panasonic, Sulpicio Lines, Nature's Spring Mineral Water, Spring Cooking Oil, Regent Foods, Firefly Lightings, Molten and Prime Channel.

Among them are Marlon Legaspi, Rysal Castro and former San Sebastian Stag Nicole Uy. Taguig also boasts former Valencia guard Joel Gragasin.

"It's more dangerous to play a team on a skid than a team on a roll," said Taguig coach Danny Gavierez.

In the end, he was also unproven

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

IN THE END, THE PROVEN ONE BECAME unproven, too.

Who said only Lamar Odom, Smush Parker, Sasha Vujacic, Kwame Brown and Luke Walton were the only unproven Lakers in the just-concluded Phoenix-Los Angeles NBA playoffs won by the Suns, 4-3?

Count Kobe Bryant in, please.

The series called for a maximum seven games to complete.

Sorry, but Bryant was essentially good only for three games.

Remember that Lakers' early 3-1 edge, forged mainly through Bryant's buzzer-beating twos in both regulation and overtime in Game 4?

The Laker joyride ended right there.

In Game 5, Bryant disappeared. Result: Phoenix won for a 3-2 Los Angeles lead.

In Game 6, Bryant reappeared. Still, Phoenix won for a 3-3 tie as Bryant failed a Michael Jordan replica at the horn.

In Game 5, Brown's sex assault charge in Los Angeles became screaming sports headlines. The first time Brown held the ball in that game, walking. With 11 minutes gone into the first quarters, he had three fouls.

It rubbed on his teammates, who were all obviously distracted, too. Result: 18 Laker turnovers produced a blowout Phoenix victory to close the gap at 3-2.

The proven one tried to resurrect his unproven teammates in Game 6. He almost succeeded.

Firing more than 50 points that evening, Bryant had the series at his fingertips. But at the buzzer, he missed the winning jumper that he would so normally make.

Had he made the shot, Bryant, who scored 81 points in January against Toronto, would have made himself the undisputed leader of a team undergoing a massive rebuilding process.

Had he made the shot, Bryant could have forged a Dream Duel of two Los Angeles teams (Lakers and Clippers) in the second round of the NBA playoffs.

Bryant took the inbound pass from the right quarter court with 6.3 seconds left in Game 6, with Phoenix up by just one in an overtime forged by the Suns on a triple by Tim Thomas that shouldn't have materialized in the first place. But that's another story worth telling sometime later.

In Game 4, there were 6.1 ticks left when Bryant grabbed a jump ball between Walton and Steve Nash.

Bryant snaked his way to right of the key and sank the winning fade away from 17 feet, with two foes in his face.

Two games later, in Game 6, Bryant was in a similar situation. Four arms blocking his view. He was some 18 feet away. A full right quarter court shot.

This time, though, the game wasn't just on the line but the series, too. Miss.

I believe Bryant could have had a better chance of scoring the winning shot if he drove to the basket.

We all make decisions in the nick of time. Sometimes, we win. Sometimes, we lose.

Anyway, as the saying goes, that's all water under the bridge now.

In Game 7 Sunday, Bryant's a-budding maturity gave in. The leadership badge that he so proudly wore on his chest in the first six games fell off. No, well, he tore it off himself.

After scoring 23 points in Game 7's first half, Bryant made just one point and attempted only 3 times from the field in the final half. Result: A 31-point Laker loss to the Suns.

That wasn't just neglecting but also abandoning one's commitment to the cause bigger than one's cause. A first-class deserter Bryant was in Game 7. AWOL.

All-Star Charles Barkley branded Bryant selfish.

Immaturity is a first cousin of selfishness.

And you thought Bryant loved his teammates that well?

True love is the most unselfish thing on earth.

* * *

Comments to menju@pldtdsl.net

Toledo cagers whip Mustangs

STANDINGS	W	L
Visayas Division		
M. Lhuillier-Cebu	7	0
Landmaster-Toledo	5	2
Mantawi Traders	3	4
Toyota-Iloilo	1	5
West Negros	0	5

Mindanao Division

Best-of-3 Semifinals

No.1 seed Iligan ties No. 4 Montaña Davao, 1-1; No. 3 Pryce Pharma-MisOr leads No. 2 PacMan-GenSan, 1-0.

GAME TODAY (*Talisay City, Negros Occ.*)

5:30 p.m.—West Negros College vs. Toyota-Iloilo Warriors

TALISAY CITY—THE VISITING CEBU Landmaster-Toledo crushed West Negros College Mustangs, 113-80, Saturday at the resumption of hostilities in the ML Kwarta Padala Mindanao Visayas Basketball Association First Conference at the Talisay City Gym.

The Toledo cagers of realtor Joe Soberano and coach Jun Tan set new tournament standards for most points in a game (113) and biggest winning margin (33) in clinching the No. 2 spot in the league backed by ML Kwarta Padala, Cokaliong Shipping Lines, Nature's Spring Drinking Water, Molten, Panasonic and Sulpicio Lines.

Guard Alex Cainglet unloaded 12 markers and Ronald Paraiso had 10 as Toledo built 30-24 and 58-45 leads in the first two quarters.

The scores:

TOLEDO 113—Cainglet 22, Paraiso 22, Saladaga 17, Bat-og 12, Sayon 10, Justiniani 9, Laborte 8, Mangubat 7, Gabas 6, Huelar 6, Malinao 3, Villamor 2.

WEST NEGROS 80—Vergara 19, Olarte 15, Villarin 11, Tizon 8, Dapar 8, Deocadis 6, Espiritu 6, Laurenio 4, Quilantang 3.

Quarters: 30-24, 58-45, 88-63, 113-80

SPORTSWATCH

Necesario leads Cebu Milo net champs

CEBU—JOHN NECESARIO EDGED RALPH JULIANNE, 6-1, 6-4, TO BAG THE unisex 10-under title in the 2006 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Cebu Country Club over the weekend. Necesario shared the limelight with Jacob Lagman in the boys' 12-under, Jayvee Canoy in the boys' 14-under, Larry Antigua in the boys' 16-under, Julrico Pagsiat in the boys' 18-under, Joan Gano in the girls' 12-under, Kristel Buenacosa in the girls' 14-under, Macy Solon in the girls' 16-under and Floreza Alesna in the girls' 18-under category in the Milo netfest organized by CTW, supported by Prince equipment and Adidas, and sanctioned by the Philta. Lagman whipped General Santos City's Kurt Gerapusco, 6-2, 6-2; Canoy routed Arc Montecalvo, 6-3, 6-0; Antigua stopped Bulacan's Reymond Padigos, 6-1, 6-4; Pagsiat tripped Leyte's Jeedree Tan, 2-6, 6-4, 10-5; Gano of Puerto Princesa downed Janice Canete, 6-3, 6-1; Buenacosa beat Cindy Gerapusco, 6-1, 6-1; Dumaguete's Solon bested Buenacosa, 6-1, 6-3; and Alesna of Bohol routed Solon, 6-1, 6-2.

New Balance readies bigger Power Race

THE NEW BALANCE 25K POWER RACE WILL BE BIGGER WHEN IT STAGES its fifth annual run on May 28 at The Fort in Global City. More than P200,000 in cash prizes and thousands more in gift certificates and giveaways are at stake. The top male and female finishers in the centerpiece 25K open race will each pocket P25,000 plus gift packs and trophies. Last year's champions in the 25K race were two-time Olympian Eduardo Buenavista and 23rd Southeast Asian Games gold medalist Christabel Martes. The top 10K winners, meanwhile, will each win P5,000 cash while the 5K champions get P3,000 each in gift certificates.

NCA derby gets going with 80 fights

THIRTY-TWO OF THE MOST PROMINENT COCKERS FROM METRO MANILA, Negros Occidental, Cebu, Davao and Iloilo clash today at Roligon Mega Cockpit in the National Cockers Association (NCA) 5-cock derby which fires off at 5 p.m. with more than 80 matches on tap. Hosts Rep. Iggy Arroyo and the Firefly Group said the derby features the entries of Danding Cojuangco, Ito Ynares, Ronnie Puno, Rudy Albano, JV Magsaysay, Butch Pichay and Rey Briones, Joey Sarasola and Edu Manzano, among others. Meanwhile, three unknown cockers ruled the 206-entry Tukaan 5-cock derby at the venue last Saturday. With identical 5-0 win-loss slates were Col. Tabique (Baguio Beans), Dennis Araullo (Bos Allida) and Ramon Saldana (Roxanne Sundance) who won the Toyota Innova for being the fastest win champion (48.25 seconds).

3-cocker at Sta. Ana kicks off today

SIXTY OR SO MATCHES ARE ROSTERED IN ANOTHER SPECIAL 3-COCK derby tonight at Sta. Ana Cockpit (AP Reyes Avenue, Makati City). The first fight starts at 7 p.m. For an entry fee of P5,550, the total cash pot at stake is P150,000, said host Rud Hernandez, who is fielding the Rud's Cafe entry. Meanwhile, the venue's crowd-drawing Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan resumes this Saturday with a total cash prize of P100,000. Entry fee is P1,100. For inquiries, call 898-3474 or 898-3475.

'Old Time Nevada' cockfest slated

VETERAN COCKER-SPORTSMAN TOS REYES HAS TEAMED UP WITH THE San Juan Coliseum management to hold the "Old Time Nevada" 4-cock derby on Wednesday with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Participants must submit their entries today from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. and call 725-5369 or 725-5665. At stake is P400,000 for an entry fee of P10,000. Another 4-cock event blasts off at SJC on Monday with Renato Shio and Ariel Garovillo as hosts.

AIRPORT CASINO
LEGENDS PL

GRAND WINNER: Jo Derek Bautista (center) receives his trophy from JB Bangsil, senior branch manager of Airport Casino Filipino after ruling the One-Million Peso Hold'em Tournament at the Parañaque gaming venue recently. Looking on at left is Rey D. Gamboa, chair of the organizing Philippine Poker Tour.

MVP Nash 'makes everyone better around him'

PHOENIX—STEVE NASH WON THE National Basketball Association's Most Valuable Player award for the second straight year Sunday, beating runner-up LeBron James by a comfortable margin.

The award was presented Sunday at a news conference at US Airways Center, where Phoenix won Game 7 of its first-round series against the Los Angeles Lakers on Saturday night.

"I have to pinch myself," the South African native said. "I can't believe that I'm standing here today. I couldn't believe it last year, and to do it again is even more difficult to understand—but I'm not going to give it back."

The Phoenix Suns point guard received 57 first-place votes and 924 points overall from a panel of 125 sports writers and broadcasters in the United States and Canada.

James of Cleveland had 16 first-place votes and 688 points overall. Dirk Nowitzki of Dallas was third with 14 first-place ballots and 544 overall. Kobe Bryant of the Lakers had 22 first place votes, but was fourth overall with 483 points.

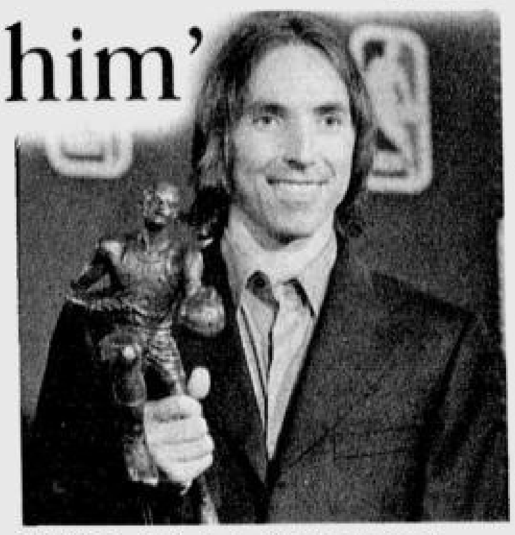
"Steve is not just a great player," Suns chair Jerry Colangelo. said "He's one of the few players who I believe have ever played who makes everyone better around him. There are very few players who have the ability to directly control the flow of the game, and he does it as well as anyone ever has."

The 32-year-old Canadian is the ninth player to win consecutive MVP awards and 11th to win it more than once.

"Steve's a leader," Suns owner Robert Sarver said. "He's the face of our team, he's the face of the organization. He's a role model for a lot of people, including me, who look up to him for his ability to constantly motivate the people around him."

This year, the Suns lost Amare Stoudemire to injury and traded Joe Johnson and Quentin Richardson. Yet they still won 54 games and a second straight Pacific Division title.

This season, Nash had career highs in scoring (18.8 points), rebounding (4.2), field goal percentage (.512) and free throw percentage (a league-leading .921). He led the league in assists at 10.5 a game and finished sixth in 3-point percentage at 43.9. *AP*



STEVE Nash: Back-to-back best player

Duncan lifts Spurs over Mavericks

NEW YORK—TIM DUNCAN INSPIRED THE SAN Antonio Spurs to an 87-85 win over the Dallas Mavericks in the opening game of their Western Conference semi-final series in Texas on Sunday.

Duncan delivered 31 points and 13 rebounds for the defending NBA champions, who were playing less than 36 hours after their last game.

"It's the playoffs," Duncan told reporters. "Everything was kind of stacked against us but we played with everything we had to.

"He's the foundation for us," Spurs coach Gregg Popovich said of Duncan, who scored 20 first-half points.

Bruce Bowen's three-pointer with 2:14 remaining broke an 84-84 tie and the Spurs never trailed as their defense clamped down on the Mavericks.

Jerry Stackhouse went for the win for Dallas at the end, missing a three-pointer when a two-point field goal would have sent the game into overtime.

He scored 24 points for Dallas, who also got 20 points and 14 rebounds from Dirk Nowitzki.

Game two of the best-of-seven series is in San Antonio on Tuesday.

Stackhouse appeared to have an open shot in the game-ending sequence, but stepped back to take a three-pointer from the corner which failed.

San Antonio's defense was especially crucial on the play.

Dallas had wanted to go to Nowitzki for the final shot, but Bowen had him covered and a pass to Stackhouse was tipped by Manu Ginobili.

Stackhouse recovered the ball but could not make the shot.

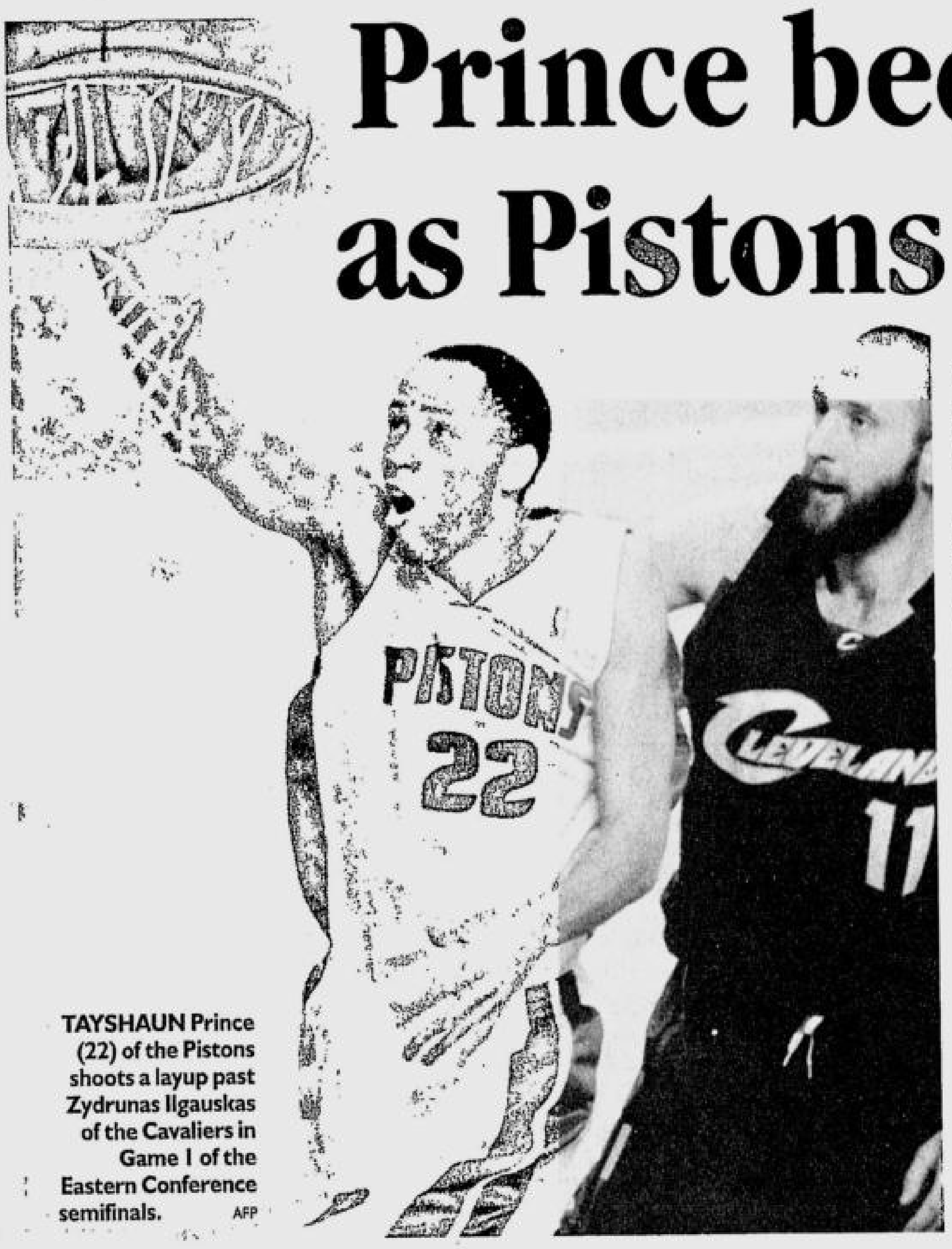
"If it somehow had a little more on it, then maybe we have a whole different feeling than we have right now," Stackhouse told reporters. "We felt like we came in here with the right attitude and the right energy. We just had a few mental mistakes in the end."

Josh Howard added 17 points for the Mavericks, while Tony Parker backed up Duncan with 19 points for San Antonio.

The loss was the first in the playoffs for Dallas, who swept Memphis in four straight games in the first round.

The Spurs needed six games to oust Sacramento, clinching the series on Friday.

Reuters



TAYSHAUN Prince (22) of the Pistons shoots a layup past Zydrunas Ilgauskas of the Cavaliers in Game I of the Eastern Conference semifinals. AFP

Prince becomes king as Pistons dump Cavs

DETROIT, MICHIGAN—TAYSHAUN PRINCE SCORED 16 OF HIS 24 points in a blistering first half as Detroit breezed to a 113-86 win over Cleveland in the opener of the National Basketball Association playoff series.

Richard Hamilton added 20 points and Chauncey Billups 14 and 10 assists for the t op-seeded Pistons, who put on an offensive clinic in looking very much like the league's best team.

"We just shot the ball great," Billups said. "When we can shoot it that good, nobody can really beat us. If any team shoots it that good, you're in trouble." The lanky Prince will be the primary defender on 21-year-old phenom LeBron James, who averaged 30.7 points in leading the fourth-seeded Cavs by the fifth-seeded Washington Wizards in six games in the first round.

James finished second in the NBA MVP voting to Steve Nash earlier Sunday.

"Tay was great because I think it's important to make LeBron work," Hamilton said. "They depend on him so much on the offensive end, you've got to make him work on the defensive end, too. Tay did an excellent job of doing that." Prince was the offensive leader in the first half, when the Pistons took all the drama out of this one.

Behind Prince, the Pistons shot 65 percent (24-of-37) and made 10-of-11 attempts from 3-point range in the first half en route to building a commanding 69-48 lead. They led by as many as 37 points in the second half Detroit shot 52 percent (42-of-81) overall and went 15-of-22 from the arc.

"We got our behinds kicked," Cleveland coach Mike Brown said. "I'll tell you what, they shot the heck out of the ball. They jumped on us early. This team already has a lot of confidence and when they go on runs like that at the end of the quarters, they tend to pounce on you. They played a (heck) of a ballgame." James scored all 22 of his points in the first half for the Cavs, who are in the conference semifinals for the first time in 13 years. The star did not play the fourth quarter with the game out of reach.

Game Two is here Tuesday. *AFP*

Japan faces tough WC ride

TOKYO—JAPAN COACH ZICO FIGures his team has nothing to fear at the World Cup.

Drawn in a tough Group F that includes five-time champion Brazil, Australia and Croatia, the Asian champions will need all the courage they can muster to advance to the second round, however.

Zico, who took over from Philippe Troussier after the 2002 World Cup, said Japan's players have become stronger after a series of setbacks.

At the 2004 Asian Cup in China, local fans booed during Japan's national anthem and hung banners criticizing Tokyo's aggression during World War II. Japanese fans and players were harassed throughout the tournament and riot police were called in to ensure their safety.

Prior to a key World Cup qualifier against Oman, a typhoon swept through Japan and the team had to hold a training session in the banquet room of a hotel.

"Through tough situations like those our players have become stronger," Zico said. "We won 11 of 12 games to qualify for the World Cup and we'll be heading to Germany with confidence."

Zico will have some tough questions of his own to resolve before Japan opens its World Cup campaign on June 12 against Australia.

While he originally intended to go with a midfield consisting of Hidetoshi Nakata (Bolton), Shunsuke Nakamura (Celtic), Junichi Inamoto (West Bromwich Albion) and former Feyenoord player Shinji Ono, Zico said the emergence of domestic players Mitsuo Ogasawara and Takashi Fukunishi could result in a change of plans. *AP*

VICTORIOUS: Michael Schumacher won his second straight Formula One race after taking out the European Grand Prix for the sixth time on Sunday in Nuerburgring, Germany. AP

CRISTIE Kerr jumps into the arms of her fiance, Erik Stevens, after ruling the Franklin American Championship. AP

Kerr snares LPGA Franklin title at Stanford's expense

FRANKLIN, TENNESSEE—CRISTIE Kerr fired a final round 5-under-par 67 to beat Angela Stanford and capture the LPGA Franklin American Mortgage Championship on Sunday.

Stanford didn't card a birdie until her final hole and by then it was too late as Kerr finished at 19-under 269 to finish two shots ahead of Stanford, Lorena Ochoa and Pat Hurst.

It was Kerr's first win of the season and seventh career.

Stanford entered Sunday with a four-shot lead and was in search of her first win since 2003.

She was coming off a 6-under-par 66 on Saturday but started with seven consecutive pars and did not card a birdie until the par-5 18th, which completed a 1-over Ke73.

While Stanford was struggling, Kerr started with a birdie at the first hole.

She added two more on the front nine and another pair coming in, including a 20-footer that rattled home on the 13th and essentially clinched the tournament as Stanford bogeyed the hole.

Ochoa, the runner-up here last season, closed with a 66 and Hurst a 68 to grab a share of second.

Ji Yeon Lee signed for a 69 to finish fifth at 16-under 272. *AFP*

Furyk clinches victory with 5-foot putt

ATLANTA—IT ALL CAME DOWN TO A FIVE-foot putt that, initially, had Jim Furyk totally perplexed at the Wachovia Championship in Charlotte, North Carolina on Sunday. After consulting with his experienced caddie Mike "Fluff" Cowan and backing away once after he stood over the putt, Furyk finally took aim and coaxed the ball into the cup. Fractionally before the ball dropped, he vigorously pumped his fist to celebrate an 11th PGA Tour victory, sealed at the first extra hole of a playoff with South Africa's Trevor Immelman. *Reuters*

Martinez, 2 others gain Ammet Cup q'finals

LIGHTWEIGHT MITCHEL MARTINEZ, light-flyweight Albert Pabila and featherweight Anthony Marcial beat their respective foes and barged into the quarterfinals of the Ammet Comet Cup XX International Senior and Female Boxing Tournament in Istanbul, Turkey.

Martinez, the reigning Asian and Southeast Asian Games titlist rocked Isyk Denyz of Turkey with body blows in the second and third rounds to score a 12-9 victory.

Martinez, a member of the Philippine National Police, avenged the loss suffered by compatriot Gretchen Abaniel to Turkey's Derya Aktop in the second round. Abaniel opened her campaign with an 18-11 triumph over Ukrainian Svýtlana Korkýshko but failed to find her range against the slippery Aktop.

The foreign exposure, supported by the Philippine Sports Commission and Pacific Heights, is part of the Nationals' preparations for the Doha Asian Games.

Pabila took the fight out of Mongolian J Otgonbayar from the opening bell en route to a lopsided 38-14 victory.

But the day belonged to Marcial who posted an abbreviated 28-8 win (2nd round referee-stopped-contest outscored) over Korean Chan Soun Park.

"Marcial earned the respect of the crowd with his win," said delegation head Rep. Raul Daza, Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines chair. "I remain confident that our boxers will continue their excellent showing here."

ABAP president Manny T. Lopez also expressed high hopes that the troika will go all the way. " They came to Turkey determined to show the world what Filipino boxers are capable of."

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—King Zach (6), Pabilic Express (5), Regal Kiss (3), Real Magic (4)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)— Nico's Incharge (1), Gold Collar (3), Batang Bukid (3), Letshaveaparty (2), She Boom (7)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Jet'Aime (5), La Española (6), Spoiler (1), Santa Fe (4)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Angel Eyes (7), Morning Nell (10), Bomb Shell (3), Shifty (2), Mary Jane Bomb (5)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Cute/Saint Bernard (2), Chabacana (7), Mr. Bonjing (5), Smooth Strike (3)
Race 6—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)— Lady Be Gold/Play It Again (5), Valentine Girl (6), Fastteller (8), Fancy Dancer (1), Aim For Gold (10), Korek Ka Dyan (4)
Race 7—(Pent/Qrt/Tri)—Brute Force (4), Pangako Sa'Yo (5), Color Of The Wind (1), More Love (8), Morning Glory (2)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Latin Music (14), Power Of The Wind (11), Road Runner (1), Britney's Magic (4), Western Dancer (5), Friendly Fire (9)

Negros booters stall MPL

From page A21

semifinals," said Negros coach Freddie Lazarito.

The Negrenses and MPL girls are grouped with Cagayan de Oro-Misamis Oriental and Rizal, which are playing at press time.

In other matches, Iloilo relied on 16-year-old Ma. Stellina Cataluña, who spearheaded a 7-0 whitewash of Iligan in Group B at Field 1.

Cebu was just as impressive, kicking off its bid with a 5-0 blanking of Masbate, 5-0, in Group A, before Negros Oriental scored a 6-1 thrashing of South Cotabato at field 2.

The booters from Bukidnon who made heads turn yesterday as they held powerhouse Davao to a 3-all stalemate in the week-long event organized by the Negros Occidental Football Association in cooperation with the City Government of San Carlos and supported by PFF sponsor-partners Red Ribbon, 2Go and Petron.

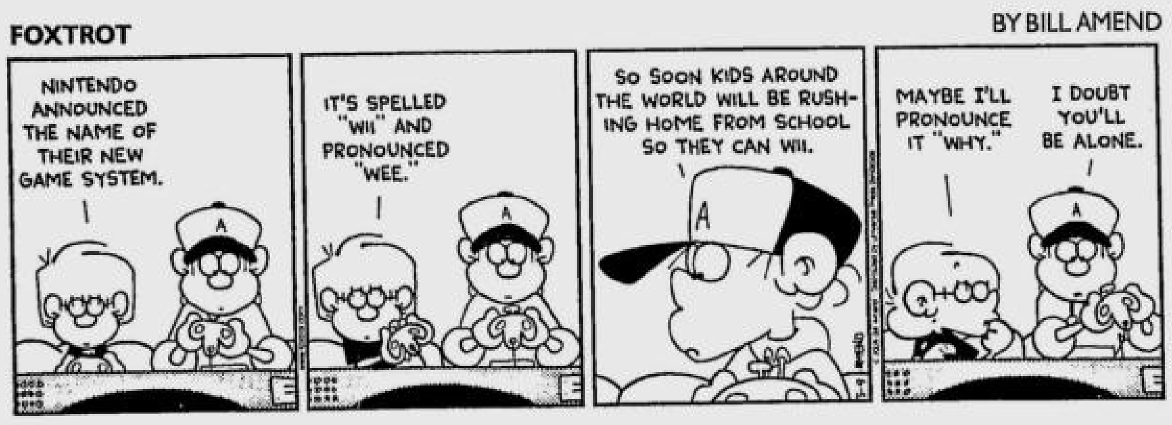
An attacking midfielder, Cataluña got her hat-trick as early as the 28th minute of the opening half. She tallied her first goal in the 6th minute from close-range after a clinical 1-2 play with Ana Marie Concepcion, before pouncing on goal mouth scrambles to strike in the 12th and 28th minutes.

Cataluña made it 5-0 in the 39th minute with a header, before grabbing her fifth goal in 59th minute with a low shot inside the box.

Concepcion struck at the stroke of halftime, before Jessa Sumagpao completed the rout with her goal two minutes into injury time in the second half. *Cedelf P. Tupas, PDI Visayas Bureau*

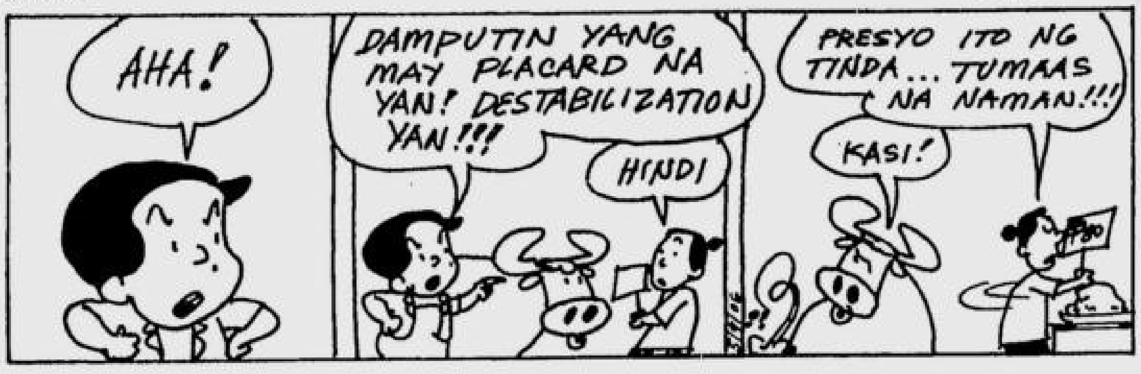
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


NINTENDO ANNOUNCED THE NAME OF THEIR NEW GAME SYSTEM.
IT'S SPELLED "WII" AND PRONOUNCED "WEE."
SO SOON KIDS AROUND THE WORLD WILL BE RUSHING HOME FROM SCHOOL SO THEY CAN WII.
MAYBE I'LL PRONOUNCE IT "WHY."
I DOUBT YOU'LL BE ALONE.

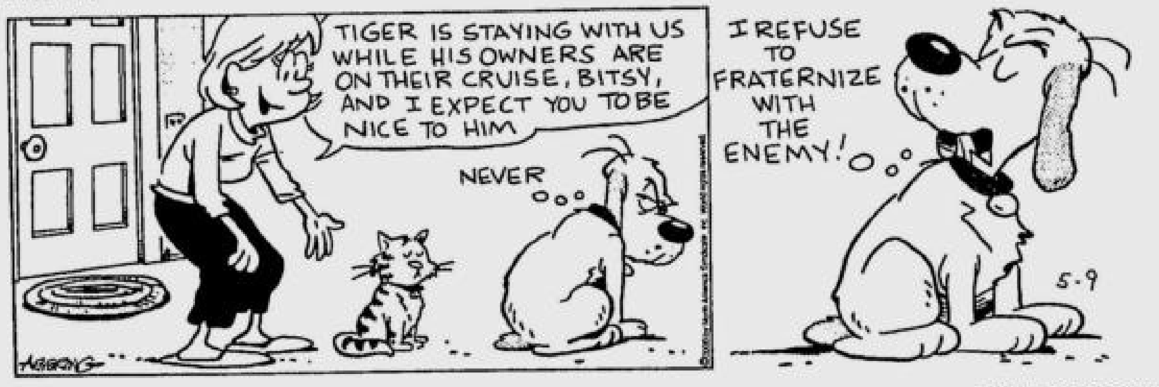
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


AHA!
DAMPUTIN YANG MAY PLACARD NA YAN! DESTABILIZATION YAN!!!
HINDI
PRESYO ITO NG TINDA... TUMAAS NA NAMAN!!!
KASI!

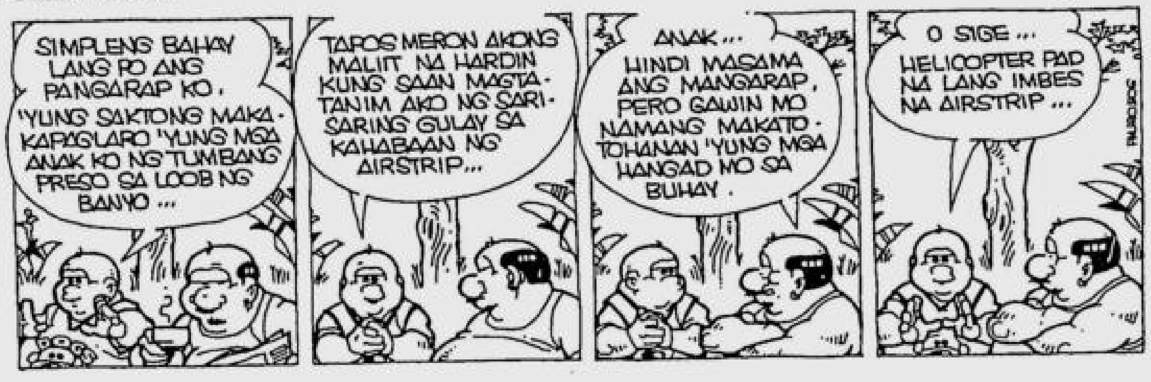
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


TIGER IS STAYING WITH US WHILE HIS OWNERS ARE ON THEIR CRUISE, BITSY, AND I EXPECT YOU TO BE NICE TO HIM
NEVER
I REFUSE TO FRATERNIZE WITH THE ENEMY!
5-9

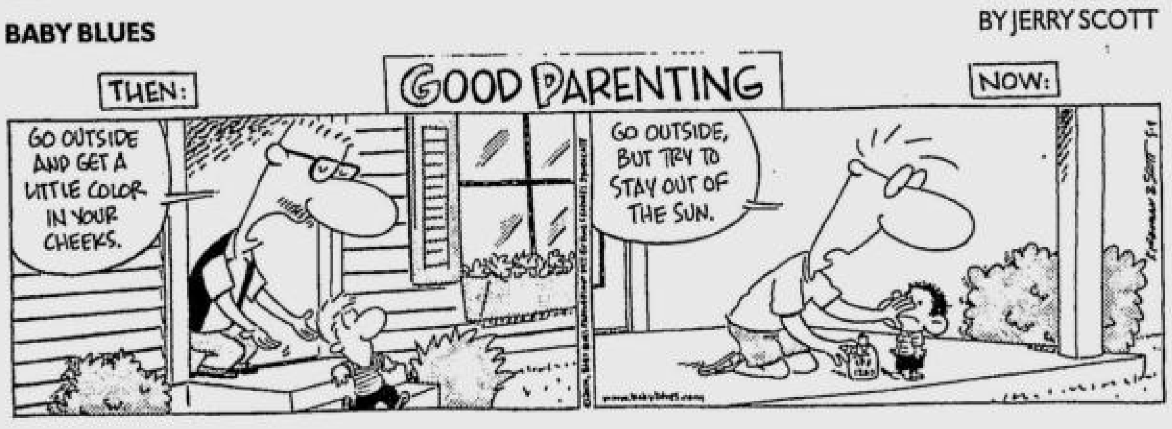
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


SIMPLENG BAHAY LANG PO ANG PANGARAP KO. 'YUNG SAKTONG MAKA-KAPAGLARO 'YUNG MGA ANAK KO NG TUMBANG PRESO SA LOOB NG BANYO ...
TAPOS MERON AKONG MALIIT NA HARDIN KUNG SAAN MAGTA-TANIM AKO NG SARI-SARING GULAY SA KAHABAAN NG AIRSTRIP...
ANAK... HINDI MASAMA ANG MANGARAP, PERO GAWIN MO NAMANG MAKATO-TOHANAN 'YUNG MGA HANGAD MO SA BUHAY.
O SIGE... HELICOPTER PAD NA LANG IMBES NA AIRSTRIP ...

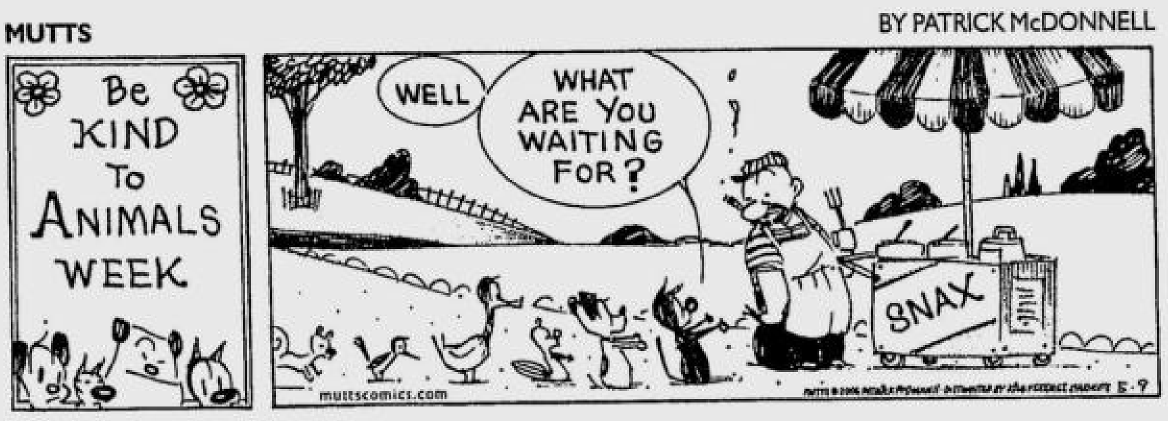
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THEN:
GOOD PARENTING
NOW:
GO OUTSIDE AND GET A LITTLE COLOR IN YOUR CHEEKS.
GO OUTSIDE, BUT TRY TO STAY OUT OF THE SUN.
www.babyblues.com

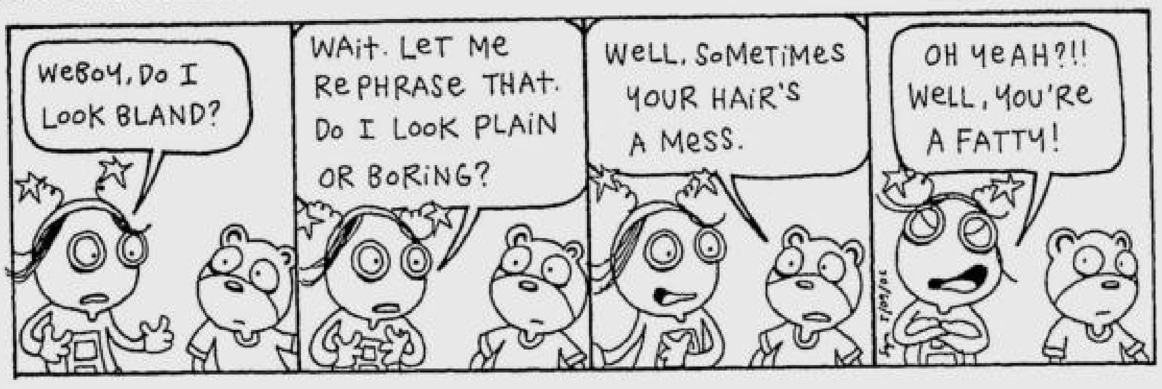
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


Be KIND To ANIMALS WEEK
WELL
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
SNAX
muttscomics.com
5-9

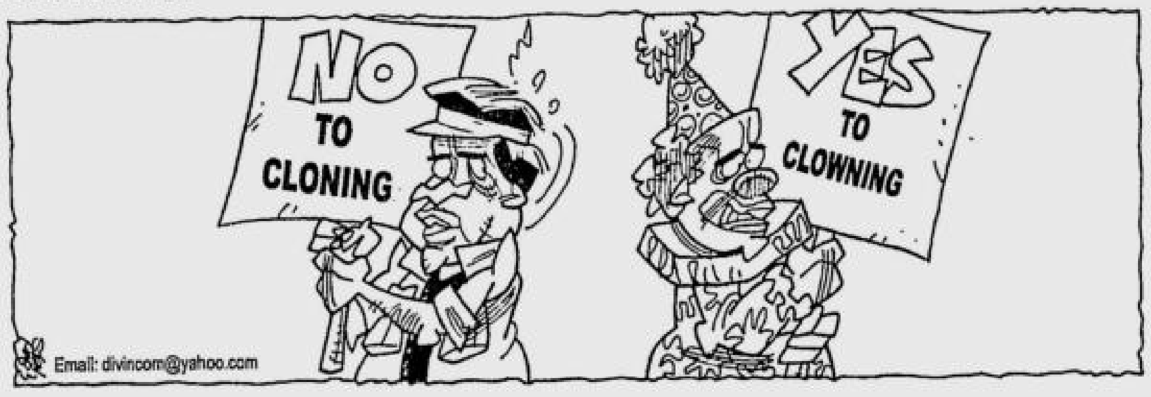
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


WeBoY, Do I LooK BLAND?
WAit. LeT Me RePHRASE THAT. Do I LooK PLAiN OR BoRiNG?
WeLL, SoMeTiMeS YOUR HAiR'S A MeSS.
OH YeAH?!! WeLL, You're A FATTY!

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


NO TO CLONING
YES TO CLOWNING

Email: divincom@yahoo.com

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're fair-minded. You have a strong moral fiber. You fight for what is right, and because of this, others respect you. You have strong opinions about things. You value your own security and believe others should have similar good fortune. You're definitely not a quitter. Work hard this year to construct or build something. You will not regret it.
Birthdate of: Steve Yzerman, hockey player; Billy Joel, singer; Mike Wallace, TV interviewer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be prepared to go more than halfway when dealing with others today, especially partners and close friends. Today's Moon is opposite your sign. You have to cooperate!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Do whatever you can today to get better organized at work and at home. It will make you feel ever so much better if you do. Pile things in neat piles. Throw out some junk.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This is a playful, flirtatious, fun-loving day! Enjoy professional sports, the theater, movies and working with children. Keep it lighthearted.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You don't mind giving a little extra attention to home, family and real estate matters. These are dear to your heart. Conversations with a parent might be significant.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is an excellent day for errands, buying and selling, shopping, wheeling and dealing, and negotiating. Conversations with siblings and relatives are important.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Your mind is on your money today. This is a good day to go shopping. It's also a good day to explore moneymaking ideas. You might also want to pay some bills.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today the Moon is in your sign. This gives you a slight advantage over all the other signs. Enjoy yourself and schmooze with everyone. You've got the gift of gab!

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Take it easy today. Work behind the scenes. Seek out some solitude. Get extra rest if possible. Don't try to push the river.

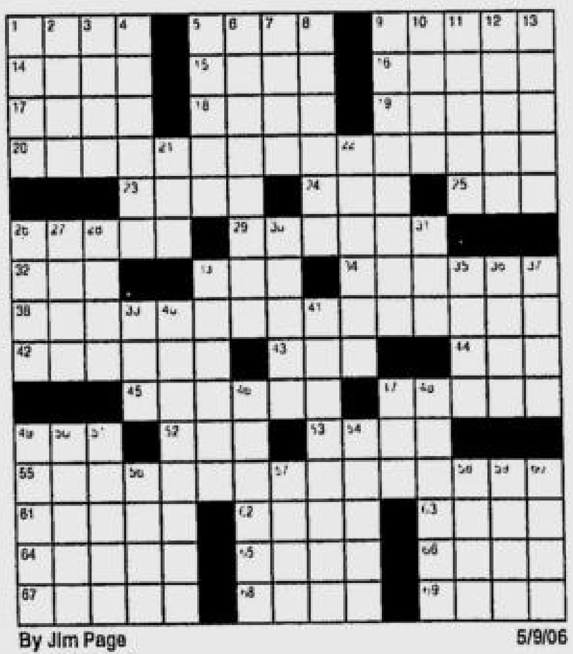
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Conversations with others, especially female friends, are important today. Somebody has something to say to you. Be a sympathetic ear for a good friend.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You'll likely do something that calls attention to yourself today. (No matter how briefly.) Be aware of this. Dress accordingly. Appearances are everything.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Your appreciation of beauty is heightened today. Enjoy a walk in the park. Visit boutiques, museums, art galleries or anyplace that appeals to you. You might like a coffee at the airport. (Aquarius rules aviation.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today you're concerned with the responsibilities you have for others. This is not something you take lightly. Define what others expect of you so that it is very clear in your mind—and theirs.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Jim Page
New York, NY

5/9/06

ACROSS

1 Donkey call
5 Sailed through
9 Holland sights
14 Bit of dialogue
15 Curly cabbage
16 Gothic arch
17 Filly feed
18 __ of March
19 Montgomerie of the PGA
20 Temperature regulators
23 Islands off Galway
24 Black goo
25 Vane dir.
26 Premarital posting
29 Polish-born French composer
32 Pub quaff
33 Tiny veggie
34 Madden
38 Meteorologist's concern
42 Luminous trail in the sky
43 Even one
44 Boastful talk
45 Indicates the way
47 Stop a rocket shot
49 Hurler's stat
52 Half a fly?
53 Swiss stream
55 Winter index figure
61 Samantha of "The Collector"
62 Conductor Riccardo
63 Bohemian
64 Horned charger
65 Bosox or Chisox player
66 Dieter's word
67 Much inclined
68 Stark naked
69 Cattle calls

DOWN

1 Voting group
2 Money of Iran
3 Body or knock lead-in
4 Toady
5 Japanese dog
6 Marchers' beats
7 Part of G.E.
8 1539 Florida visitor
9 Statement of policy
10 "Prince __"
11 Metric weights, briefly
12 Bad deeds
13 Intuit
21 "__ Poetica"
22 Table linen
26 __ of Gilead
27 __ vera
28 Salamander
30 Attacks
31 Gun owners' lobby
33 __ the thought!
35 Jason's craft
36 Stick-shift selection
37 Bridge hand
39 Zip
40 Turnips or beets, e.g.
41 Like some chips
46 __-Marcus
47 Coach Parseghian
48 Tranquilize
49 Pitchers
50 Correct
51 Rolling Stones hit
54 Burning
56 Laertes or Hamlet, e.g.
57 Real lollapalooza
58 Small singing group
59 Bart's bus driver
60 Deli loaves

Monday's Puzzle Solved

O	R	B	I	T	■	A	L	G	A	■	P	E	S	O
H	A	R	P	O	■	C	A	R	B	■	O	V	A	L
O	N	E	A	M	■	R	I	I	S	■	L	E	N	D
H	I	T	S	T	H	E	C	E	I	L	I	N	G	■
■	■	■	S	H	E	■	■	G	N	A	T	■	■	■
O	V	A	■	U	M	P	S	■	T	H	I	E	V	E
S	O	D	O	M	■	H	A	S	H	■	C	L	O	D
C	L	I	M	B	E	D	T	H	E	W	A	L	L	S
A	V	O	N	■	A	S	I	A	■	E	L	I	T	E
R	O	S	I	E	R	■	E	W	A	N	■	S	A	L
■	■	■	B	U	L	K	■	■	P	T	A	■	■	■
■	F	O	U	R	O	N	T	H	E	F	L	O	O	R
D	O	G	S	■	B	A	R	E	■	L	I	M	B	O
A	X	L	E	■	E	V	E	R	■	A	V	A	I	L
D	Y	E	S	■	S	E	E	D	■	T	E	R	S	E

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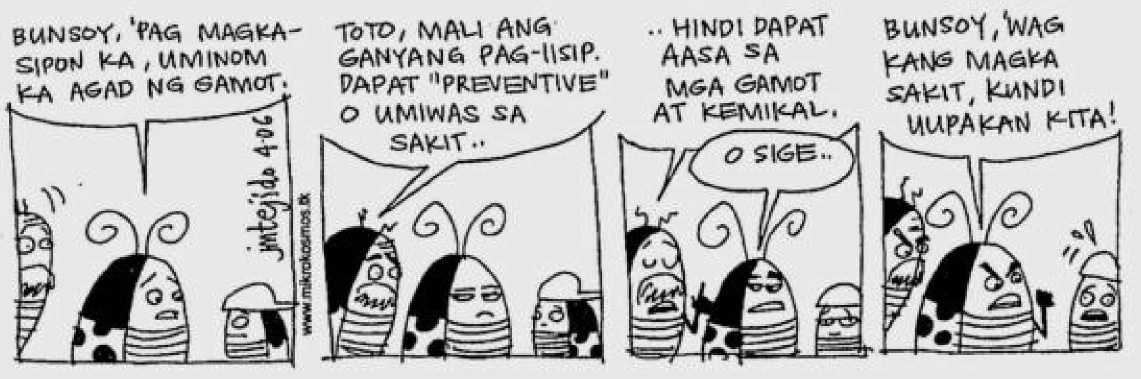
5/8/06

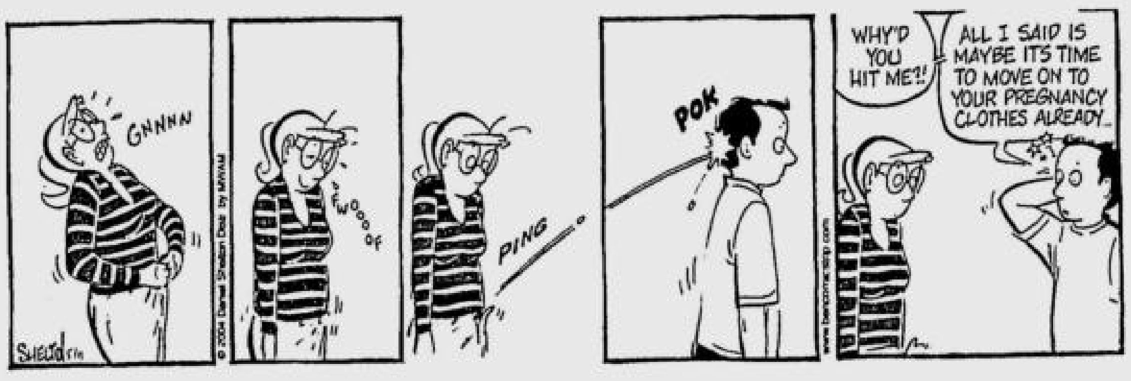
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY, 'PAG MAGKA-SIPON KA, UMINOM KA AGAD NG GAMOT.
jmtejido 4-06
www.mikrokosmos.tk
TOTO, MALI ANG GANYANG PAG-IISIP. DAPAT "PREVENTIVE" O UMIWAS SA SAKIT..
.. HINDI DAPAT AASA SA MGA GAMOT AT KEMIKAL.
O SIGE..
BUNSOY, 'WAG KANG MAGKA SAKIT, KUNDI UUPAKAN KITA!

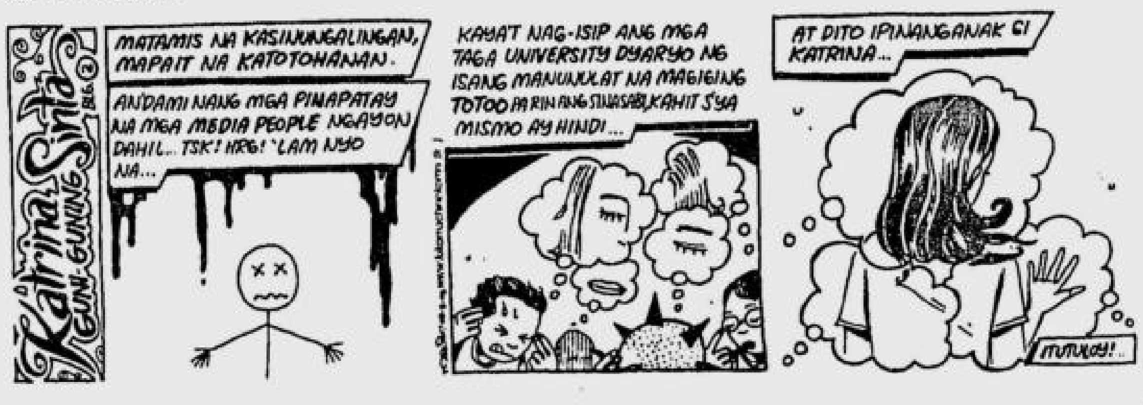
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


GNNNN
WOOOOF
PING
POK
WHY'D YOU HIT ME?!
ALL I SAID IS MAYBE IT'S TIME TO MOVE ON TO YOUR PREGNANCY CLOTHES ALREADY...

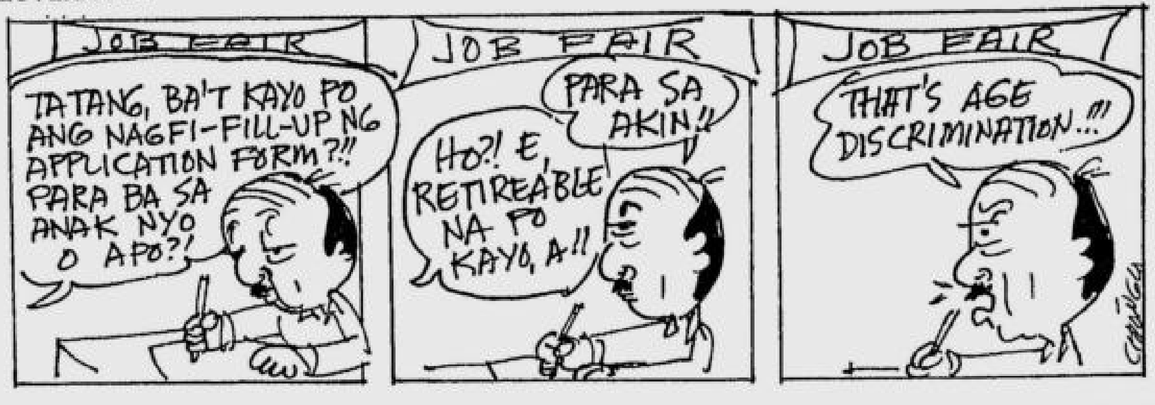
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


Katrina Sinta GUNI-GUNING
MATAMIS NA KASINUNGALINGAN, MAPAIT NA KATOTOHANAN.
AN'DAMI NANG MGA PINAPATAY NA MGA MEDIA PEOPLE NGAYON DAHIL... TSK! HRG! 'LAM NYO NA...
KAYA'T NAG-ISIP ANG MGA TAGA UNIVERSITY DYARYO NG ISANG MANUNULAT NA MAGIGING TOTOO PA RIN ANG SINASABI, KAHIT S'YA MISMO AY HINDI...
AT DITO IPINANGANAK SI KATRINA...
ITUTULOY!

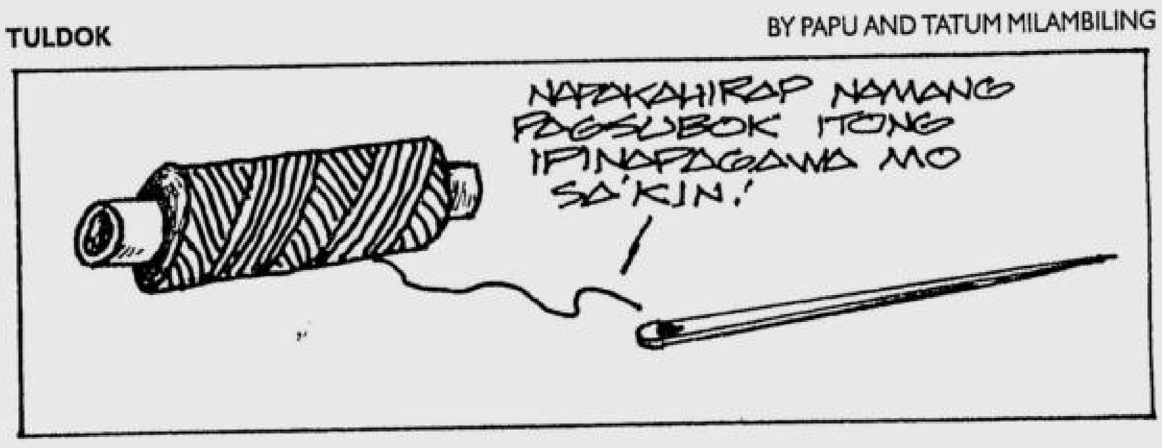
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOB FAIR
TATANG, BA'T KAYO PO ANG NAGFI-FILL-UP NG APPLICATION FORM?!! PARA BA SA ANAK NYO O APO?!
JOB FAIR
PARA SA AKIN!!
HO?! E, RETIREABLE NA PO KAYO, A!!
JOB FAIR
THAT'S AGE DISCRIMINATION..!!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NAPAKAHIRAP NAMANG PAGSUBOK ITONG IPINAPAGAWA MO SA'KIN!

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/ag
283 (Smart) or email us at pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

'Bituing Walang ... Pahinga'?

SARAH Geronimo

THE TAPING OF "BITUING WALANG NINGNING" PACKED UP because **Sarah Geronimo** had high fever. Even if she wasn't feeling well, Sarah neither whined nor whimpered. So young and already a pro! Clearly, it was a case of fatigue. Straight from her US tour, she reported for the taping. A young girl like her ought to stop working too hard and just play harder to get!' Or her soap will be called "Bituing Walang Pahinga" instead.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Ann Carvajal

- **Lovers JC Parker** and **Danilo Barrios** almost drowned in Boracay when their speedboat capsized. Only their presence of mind saved them. In the sea of love, JC and Danilo also happily remain afloat.
- **Brent Javier** is harping about SM's nonpayment of his talent fee as one of the department store's models. But my SM source insists that Brent's TF is on hold because he has not been showing up for his pictorials. No show, no pay! Models must show up for work with their drop-dead gorgeous looks or just drop dead?
- **Maegan Aguilar** and her fiancé Shawn are expecting their firstborn. Yup! **Freddie Aguilar's** "Anak" is having a baby! Wouldn't it be cute if Ka Freddie came up with a new song, "Apo" which could also be translated in different languages? "Mama" Maegan will soon be able to relate to her dad's phenomenal signature song.
- **JB Magsaysay** is more sad than hurt that his ex, **Say Alonzo** is giving him the cold treatment, "She just suddenly ignored me but that's okay. Closed book *na naman kami.*" Their romance was apparently co-terminus with their stay inside Big Brother's house. So was the fate of ex-housemates **Bianca Gonzales** and **Zanjoe Marudo's** love affair. Wonder who among the "PBB" teens now will be the next doomed lovers? Now they feel it, now they don't?

Second generation

Paolo Valenciano and **Karylle**. He is the son of Mr. Pure Energy **Gary V.** and she is the daughter of Divine Diva **Zsa Zsa Padilla**. Will they have the same kind of onstage chemistry that their parents do? Find out when they join Gary and Zsa Zsa in "Faces of Love" in Bohol, tonight at the New Calape Cultural Center; and in Cebu tomorrow at the Pacific Grand Ballroom of Waterfront Hotel Lahug. Call (038) 507-9180 for Bohol and (032) 412-4512 for Cebu.

For sick kids

Amid the merrymaking during Metrowalk's anniversary, **Richard Gomez, Lucy Torres-Gomez, Francis M,** MYMP (**Juris Fernandez** and **Chin Alcantara**) and a lot of bands (Sandwich, Protein Shake, 6 cycle mind etc.) made an urgent appeal to all the revelers to donate to "Project Brave Kids." It's an organization that helps kids stricken with cancer. All the artists performed gratis et amore that night. It's heartwarming to know that there are good souls like them. Cancer is not contagious but the sincere desire of Goma, Lucy and company to help definitely is!

Sweet Cherrie Pie

When the shooting of "Manay Po" wrapped up, **Cherrie Pie Picache** gave her co-stars—**John Prats, Polo Ravales, Jirio Mano, Christian Vasquez,** my beloved **IC** and the rest—copies of the classic book, "Hope for the Flowers." She even wrote a personal dedication on every book. **Cherrie Pie** truly lives up to her sweet-sounding name.

BITUING/ A2-2

SEASON FINALE: FIRST ON STAR WORLD
American Idol
MAY 24 & 25
5PM VIA SATELLITE, 8PM PRIMETIME
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ARANETA CENTER
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Gateway Cineplex 10
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SLITHER 1:20 / 3:25 / 5:30
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THE SENTINEL 7:25 / 9:45
GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
THE WILD 1:00 / 3:00 / 5:00 / 7:00 / 9:00
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS 7:40 / 9:50
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 11:50 / 12:30 / 1:25 / 1:50 / 2:30 / 3:10 4:05 / 4:30 / 5:10 / 5:50 / 6:45 7:10 / 7:50 / 8:30 / 9:25 / 9:50
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:10 / 3:50 / 6:30 / 9:10
AQUAMARINE 12:30 / 2:45 / 5:00 / 7:15 / 9:30
D' LUCKY ONES 12:40 / 2:50 / 5:00
ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299
MALL CINEMAS
1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE: 3 12:25 / 3:05 / 5:45 / 8:25
2 SILENT HILL 12:20 / 3:00 / 5:40 / 8:20
3 THE SENTINEL 1:35 / 3:55 / 6:15 / 8:35
4 THE WILD 12:00 / 2:00 / 4:00 / 6:00 / 8:00
5 SLITHER 12.15 / 2:20 / 4:25 / 6:30 / 8:35
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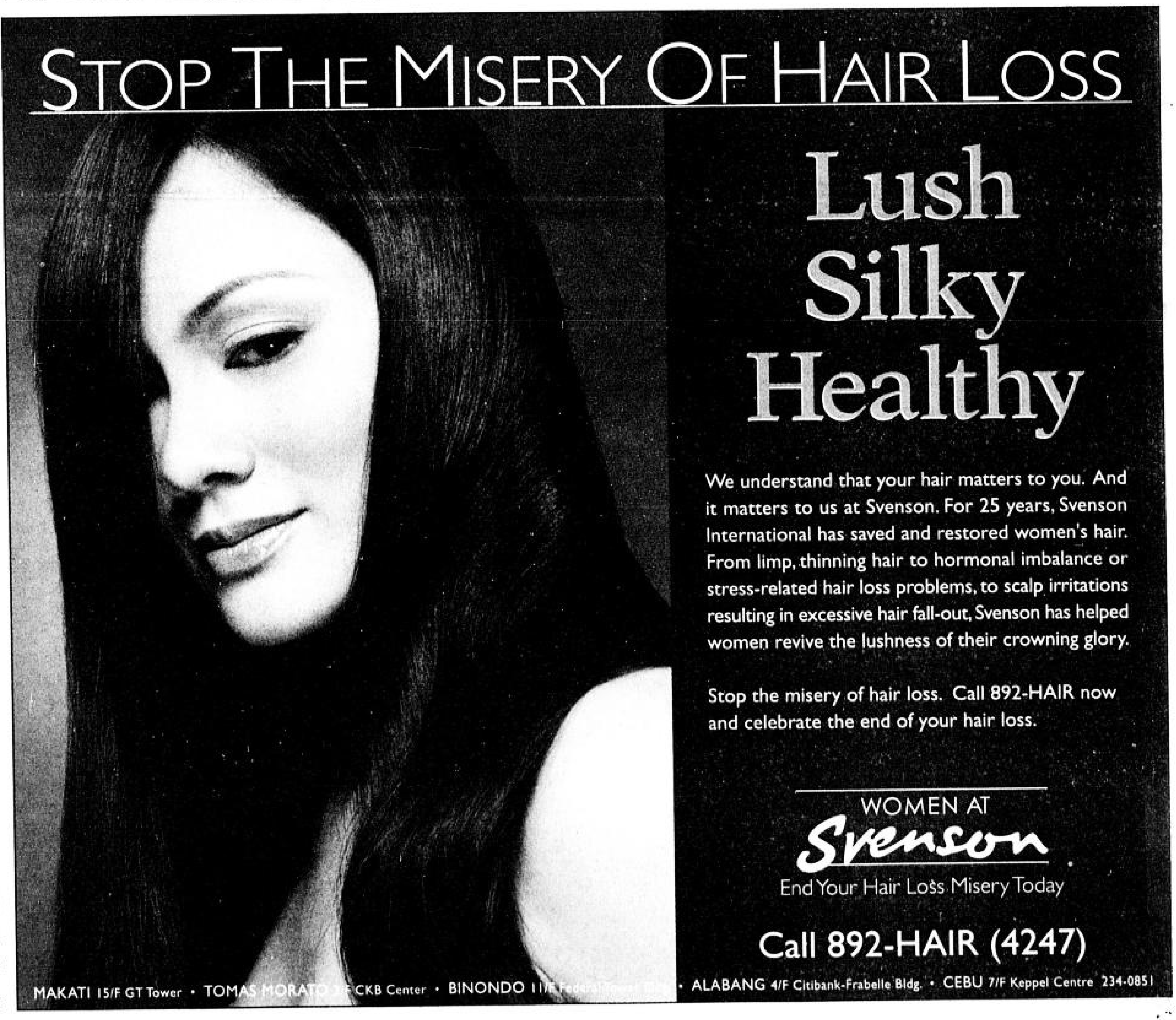

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METRO MANILA

THE PODIUM

CINEMA 1
M:I:III

CINEMA 2
M:I:III

SM MEGACINEMA

1 SENTINEL
2 SUBMERGED
3 M:I:III
4 THE WILD
5 AQUAMARINE
6 M:I:III
7 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
8 ICE AGE 2
9 SILENT HILL
10 M:I:III
11 PAMAHIIN
12 D LUCKY ONES

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 M:I:III
2 THE WILD
3 SILENT HILL
4 M:I:III
5 PAMAHIIN
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 AQUAMARINE
8 SENTINEL

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 M:I:III
2 PAMAHIIN
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 M:I:III

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 SUBMERGED
2 ICE AGE 2
3 PAMAHIIN
4 M:I:III
5 M:I:III
6 SILENT HILL
7 M:I:III
8 THE WILD
9 D LUCKY ONES
10 EIGHT BELOW
11 SENTINEL
12 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 M:I:III
2 AQUAMARINE
3 SILENT HILL
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 M:I:III
6 SENTINEL
7 EIGHT BELOW
8 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
9 THE WILD
10 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 M:I:III
2 THE WIILD
3 SENTINEL
4 M:I:III

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 SILENT HILL
5 THE WILD
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY MANILA

1 AQUAMARINE
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 SENTINEL
4 M:I:III
5 THE WILD
6 M:I:III
7 SILENT HILL
8 M:I:III
9 D LUCKY ONES
10 SUBMERGED
11 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
12 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 M:I:III
2 AQUAMARINE
3 M:I:III
4 M:I:III
5 SENTINEL
6 SILENT HILL
7 THE WILD
8 PAMAHIIN
9 D LUCKY ONES

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE WILD

SM CITY SUCAT

1 D LUCKY ONES
2 M:I:III
3 M:I:III
4 SILENT HILL

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SM CITY BAGUIO

1 GLORY ROAD
2 THE WILD
3 M:I:III
4 M:I:III

SM CITY MARILAO

1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 PAMAHIIN
4 THE WILD

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 THE WILD
2 D LUCKY ONES
3 M:I:III
4 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY BACOOR

1 EIGHT BELOW
2 PAMAHIIN
3 M:I:III
4 SILENT HILL
5 M:I:III
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 THE WILD
8 SUBMERGED

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 PAMAHIIN
2 NANNY McPHEE
3 M:I:III
4 SENTINEL

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 THE WILD
4 D LUCKY ONES
5 CHINESE TALL STORY
6 PAMAHIIN

SM CITY LUCENA

1 NANNY McPHEE
2 M:I:III
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 EIGHT BELOW

SM CITY MOLINO

1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 THE WILD
4 SUBMERGED

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 M:I:III
2 M:I:III
3 SENTINEL
4 NORTH COUNTRY
5 THE DARK
6 D LUCKY ONES
7 M:I:III
8 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY ILOILO

1 D LUCKY ONES
2 RESERVED
3 M:I:III
4 THE WILD
5 M:I:III
6 SILENT HILL
7 RESERVED
8 CHINESE TALL STORY

SM CITY DAVAO

1 M:I:III
2 GLORY ROAD
3 D LUCKY ONES
4 THE WILD
5 M:I:III
6 M:I:III

SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 M:I:III
2 PAMAHIIN
3 JUST FRIENDS
4 M:I:III

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1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 • THX
1:30 4:10 6:50 9:30

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:20 2:00 4:40 7:20 10:00

3 THE SENTINEL
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

4 PAMAHIIN
11:40 2:15 4:50 7:25 10:00

5 AQUAMARINE
12:10 2:35 5:00 7:25 9:50

6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00

7 THE WILD
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

8 SLITHER
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

9 PAMAHIIN
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

10 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

ERMITA 538-7809 to 12

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
10:30 1:10 3:50 6:30 9:00

2 SLITHER
12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00

3 THE WILD 12:00 1:30 3:00
WHEN A STRANGER CALLS 5:00 6:40 8:20 10:00

4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:50 2:10 4:50 7:30 10:00

5 THE SENTINEL
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

6 AQUAMARINE
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

7 SILENT HILL
11:00 1:50 4:30 7:10 9:50

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 SLITHER
11:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
1:15 4:00 6:45

3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4:00 6:45 9:15

4 SILENT HILL
12:30 3:20 6:10 9:00

5 THE WILD
12:40 2:20 4:00 5:40 7:20 9:00

6 WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

7 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:00 1:45 4:30 7:15

8 THE SENTINEL
12:25 2:35 4:45 6:55 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 SILENT HILL
4 D' LUCKY ONES
5 THE SENTINEL
6 SLITHER

CITISQUARE MALABON 288-2575

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 PAMAHIIN
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

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1 THE WILD
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 AQUAMARINE
4 SILENT HILL

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3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
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2 SLITHER
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4 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

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6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3

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3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2
5 JUST FRIENDS
6 FINAL DESTINATION 3

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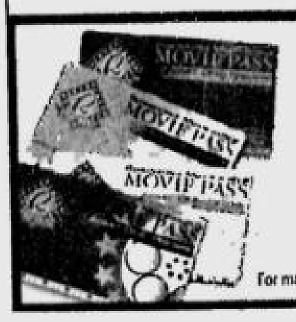
3 SILENT HILL
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
5 GRANDMA'S BOY
6 TIGER BLADE



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MA

Stars' ups and in-be

From page A2-1

La Pinay

Our bet to the Miss Univ texted one of her close frien to win. Miss USA is only 5'5 ly the height but also the de

Another *La Pinay* to be Precious Lara Quigaman. Sl ful Beauty queen of 2005 cious, indeed!

Culinary fest

Enjoy the gustatory delig Ilonggo culinary festival at ongoing until May 19 (it chef is my good friend Pauli

Readers' corner

"Just a little reaction to yo Milby. Without a doubt i to the enchanting 'You an Wannadies, ultimately le uncontrollably to the forc the song. Well, 'rip-off' w although I reckon 'photoc "You and Me Song" is a g unheralded in Manila. I t believed he could get awa the deafening sound of cr issue, I think Sam was sp stadaenko@yahoo.com

(E-mail wateringholeshar

Secrets ar speculatic

days.

It was instructive to figure o Christianity was able to attrac ers, and in time because the c tries.

Some of the factors workin mass base, optimism, well-st rules and catechism, and focu ers.

On May 3, "Apocalypse" prophesied in the Bible. The predictions to today's natural

Some resource persons felt already at hand, but the docu call many instances in the pa about the end of the world p even ludicrously, premature.

The program's main point rified by the biblical Apocaly them to live better lives.

The point was well-taken, less than choice because it als tions more than once too ofte

Based on our viewing of S grams, we give the limited se occasionally speculative bent. a program's main focus, we e fortitude.

The added factor of religio quirement all the more string

It isn't cricket to speculate, if's and but's, because the spe sive power is only diminished to confuse or disturb.

"The Knights Templar" wil Jesus" at 1 p.m. and "Apocaly

Series for a cause

Concert performer, recordi Cerrudo is currently rehearsin rudo Classico ... Classis Ko," Greenhills every Wednesday t

The performance series is tions, NGOs and charitable g causes and beneficiaries.

Bimbo's concert repertoire cal-pop crossover tunes. He piece Manila Philharmonic ducting. Call 0918-270-4 co@gmail.com. The Teatrino

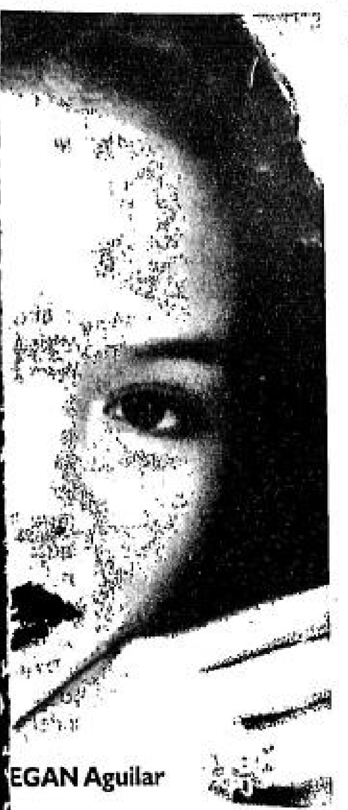
'The Apprentice'

The fourth season of "The Star World (Wednesdays, 6 spar in the business arena t durance, cunning and charis next protege, with a hefty six-

'Some Hearts'

American Idol Carrie Und anticipated debut album, "So bought more than three millio the highest charting album fo

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



EGAN Aguilar

Freddie Aguilar's 'anak' is now a mom. Maybe he can write another monster hit. How about … 'Apo'?

downs
tweens

erse pageant, Lianne Ramos,
ds: "Wow! I have a big chance
; I'm 5'7"." Lianne has not on-
oth of a *Pinay*.
roud of is Miss International
e was voted 2nd Most Beauti-
by the Global Beauties. Pre-

ıts of Iloilo in "Manamit!", an
the Mandarin Oriental Hotel
pened yesterday). The guest
he Gorriceta-Banusing.

ur little exposé on **Sam**
ı my mind, Sam listened a lot
d Me Song' of the
ıding the poor chap to submit
es that led him to 'rip-off'
ıs your terminology,
opy! would be more apropos.
eat hit in Europe but
ink Sam Milby actually
y with that. Judging by
ickets surrounding this
t on!!!"

grila@yahoo.com)

d other
ons

From page A2-4

ut, along with the program, how
t the greatest number of follow-
ominant religion in many coun-

g in Christianity's favor were its
uctured church hierarchy, clear
s on love for God, self and oth-

ocused on the "End Days" as
rogram tried to link those early
nd man-made disasters.
that the world's final times are
entary went out of its way to re-
t when doomsayers' predictions
oved to be embarrassingly, and

vas that people shouldn't get ter-
se, but take it as a reminder for

ut we found the May 3 telecast
resorted to speculative nomina-

cret Bible Week's first three pro-
es only a passing mark due to its
When "history" is supposed to be
xpect greater clarity and factual

us topicality only makes this re-
nt.
ıen counter the speculation with
ulative note's persuasive or sua-
and retains some of its capacity

be replayed at noon, "Rivals of
se" at 2 p.m., all on May 13.

ıg artist and theater actor Bimbo
for his series for a cause, "Cer-
o be staged at the Teatrino in
om July 5 to August 30.
open to foundations, organiza-
oups, to raise funds for various

anges from light opera to classi-
vill be performing with the 16-
rchestra, Rodel Colmenar con-
20 or email cerrudoclassi-
eries is presented by PLDT.

Apprentice" starts tomorrow on
.m.). Eighteen new candidates
see who has the smarts, en-
na to become Donald Trump's
gure paycheck.

rwood has released her much-
ne Hearts." US music buffs have
n copies of her album, making it
a debut artist in 2005.

THE #1 MOVIE IN AMERICA!
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The MINER
The DARK NURSES
The JANITOR
The GREY CHILD
The RED PYRA
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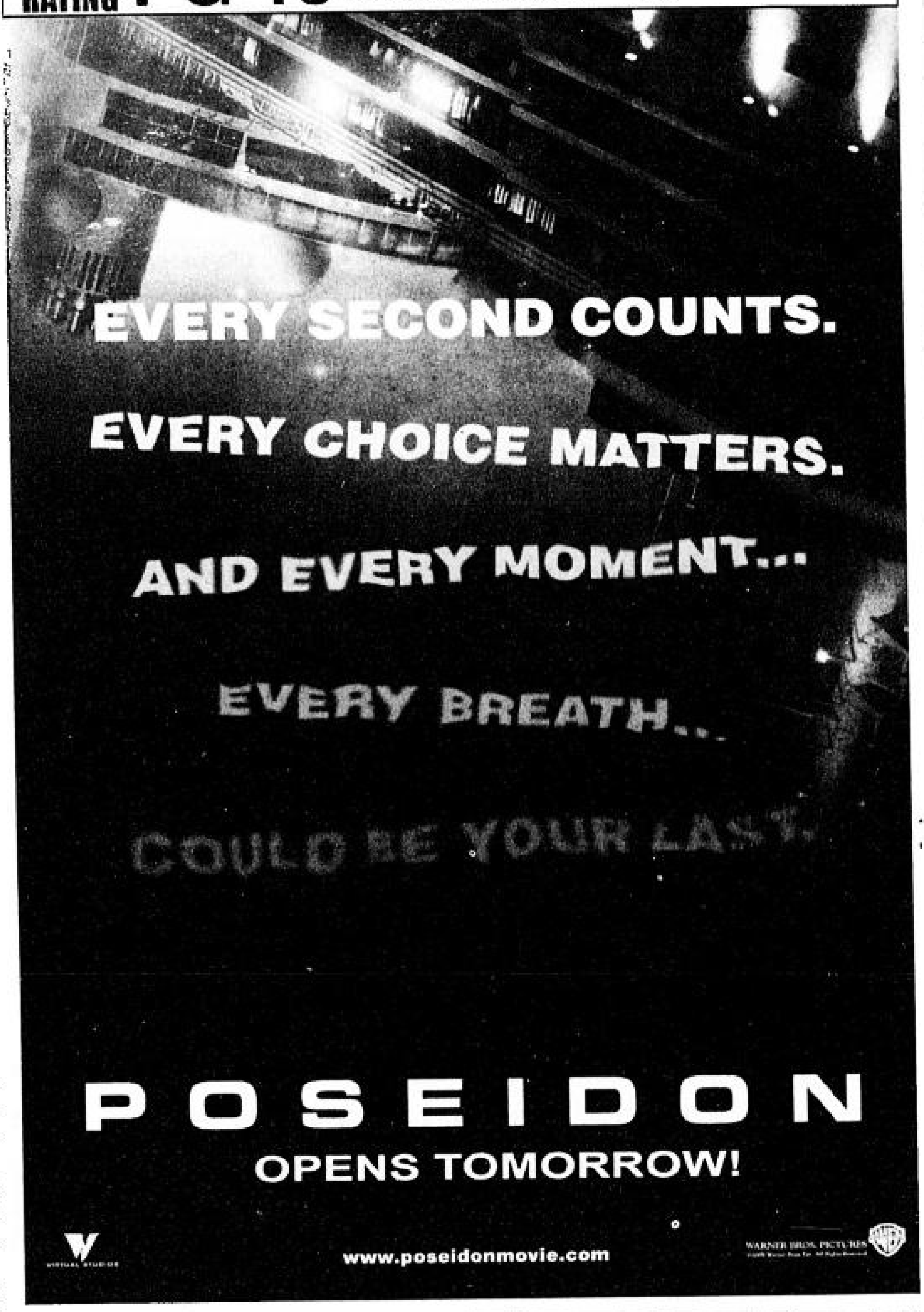
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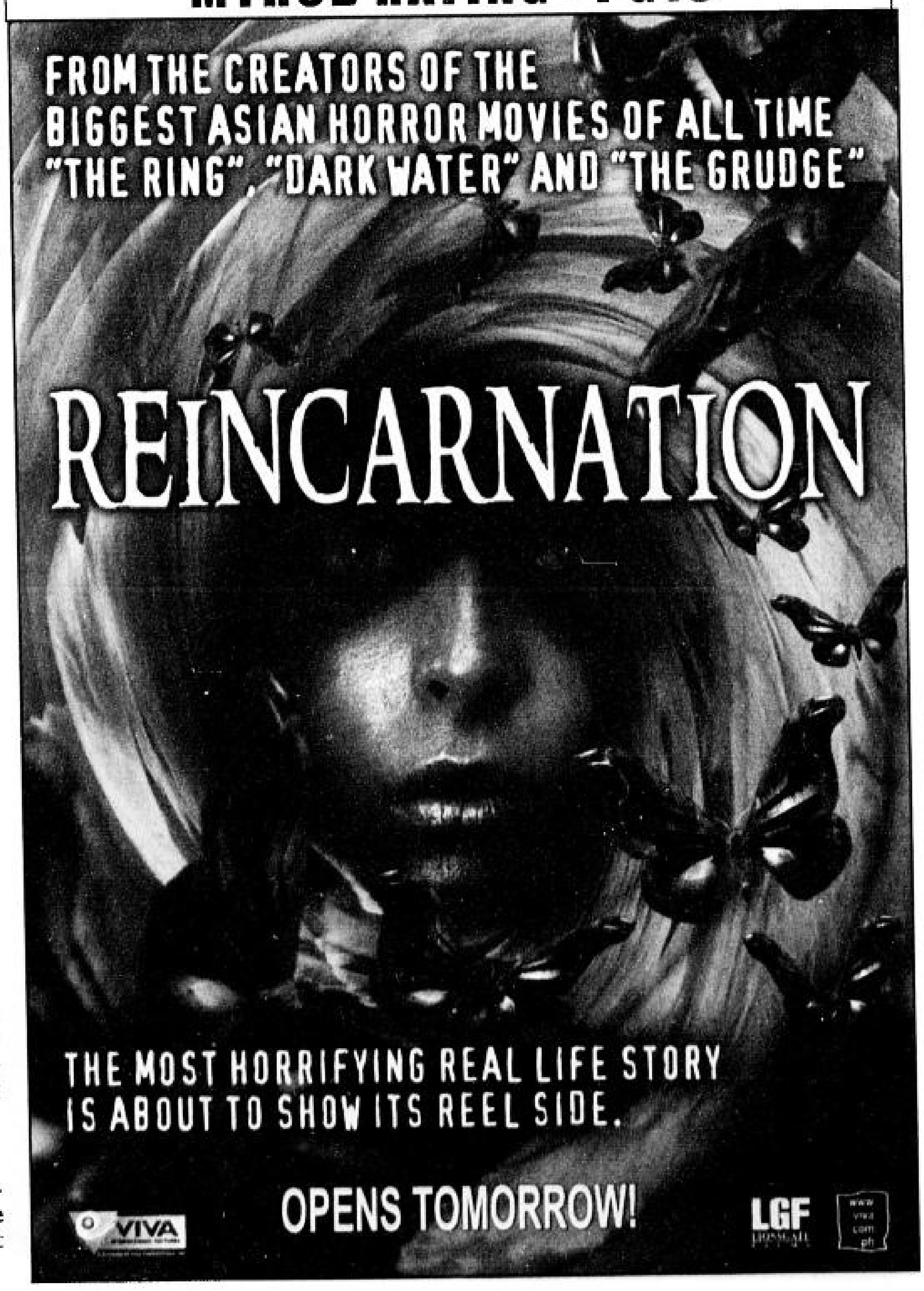
EVERY CHOICE MATTERS.
AND EVERY MOMENT...
EVERY BREATH...
COULD BE YOUR LAST.
POSEIDON
OPENS TOMORROW!
www.poseidonmovie.com

MTRCB RATING - PG13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Telephone: 633.2227 / 6337851 loc. 171
1 (DOLBY) THE WILD GP
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13
3 (DOLBY) AQUAMARINE PG13
4 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13
PREMIERE
(DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 (DDS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 (SDDS) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DTS) THE WILD
4 GOLD (DTS) AQUAMARINE
5 GOLD (DOLBY) THE SENTINEL
6 GOLD (SDDS) SILENT HILL
7 GOLD (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
8 (DOLBY STEREO) SLITHER
9 (DOLBY STEREO) PAMAHIIN
10 (DOLBY STEREO) D'LUCKY ONES

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City)
tel 687.6963 or 72
1 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 (DOLBY) AQUAMARINE

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 PAMAHIIN
2 (DTS) THE SENTINEL
3 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 NANNY MC PHEE
2 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DTS) PAMAHIIN
4 BASIC INSTICNT 2

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2
3 (DOLBY) EIGHT BELOW

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 SUBMERGED
2 D' LUCKY ONES
3 (DOLBY) WHEN A STRANGER CALLS
4 (DTS) TRISTAN AND ISOLDE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 EIGHT BELOW
3 (DOLBY) THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan)
1 PAMAHIIN
2 NORTH COUNTRY

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 SILENT HILL
4 THE SENTINEL / MI-3

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) MI-3
2 (DOLBY) THE WILD
3 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 (DOLBY) SILENT HILL

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 SLITHER
3 SILENT HILL
4 PAMAHIIN
5 D' LUCKY ONES

starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) SILENT HILL
5 SLITHER

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 FINAL DESTINATION
3 SUBMERGED
4 RESERVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 5433994
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 SILENT HILL
3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
4 SLITHER

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 SLITHER
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 SILENT HILL

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 D' LUCKY ONES
2 SLITHER

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) SLITHER
2 TAMPISAW
3 MASARAP HABANG MAINIT
4 (DTS) MURDER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 NANNY MCPHEE
3 (DTS) PAKAWALANG PUSO
4 BASIC INSTINCT 2
5 SLITHER

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 BASIC INSTINCT 2

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan.
Telephone No (044) 600-3026
1 SUBMERGED
2 PAMAHIIN
3 THE HILLS HAVE EYES

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
3 (DTS EX) THE HILLS HAVE EYES
4 D' LUCKY ONES

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 BASIC INSTINCT
2 TRISTAN AND ISOLDE
3 THE WILD
4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-6271
☆ MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
☆ THE HILLS HAVE EYES
☆ RESERVED
☆ RESERVED

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 D' LUCKY ONES

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 SLITHER
2 NAIIBANG HAYOP

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

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Secrets and other speculations

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC Channel's "Secret Bible Week" program last May 1-5 turned to be a topical view, especially due to the current controversy over "The Da Vinci Code," the book and the forthcoming film.

Last Monday, the focus was on the Knights Templar. The NGC documentary about the secret society described as "Europe's most powerful religious body in its power, up to its decline when it ran counter to the wishes and dictates of a French King, and onward to its hidden links to Freemasonry.

We appreciated the program's coverage, but found some of its "revelations" speculative, so its impact was blunted.

The May 2 documentary on "Rivals of Jesus" fared better because it hewed more to fact than conjecture. Quite a number of other healers, prophets and Jesus' death, other preachers formed cults that sought to rival Christianity in its earliest

SECRETS/ A2-2

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 THE WILD
MTRCB: GP
1:20, 3:15, 5:10, 7:05, 9:00

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
MTRCB PG-13
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00 LMF

3 AQUAMARINE
MTRCB GP
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
MTRCB PG-13
11:30, 2:20, 5:10, 8:00

PREMIERE THEATRE
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
MTRCB PG-13
12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00

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Catch the Cineplex Special

Celebrate Mother's Day at the Shang with "The San Miguel Summer Music Festival at the Shangri-La Plaza" hosted by Maestro Ryan Cayabyab at the Grand Atrium, Level 2.
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THE SAN MIGUEL MASTER CHORALE WITH
THE SAN MIGUEL PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

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2: Silent Hill
3: Slither

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
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2: Silent Hill
3: Mission Impossible 3
4: Bandidas

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Every Tuesdays Stand-Up Comedy, Every Fridays Live Acoustic Bands at Cuba Libre Bar Starmall Edsa
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Nexxus Band (May 6) Jed Madela (May 7) Side A (May 27) Metropolis Alabang
Side A (May 6) Starmall Edsa.

for movie schedules, log on to www.clickthecity.com

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City
☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

THE SENTINEL PG13 12:50,3:10,5:30,7:50,10:10	AQUAMARINE G 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10,10:30	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 12:50,3:30,6:10,8:50
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 1:40,4:20,7:00,9:40	THE WILD GP 2:00,4:00,6:00 SILENT HILLS PG13 7:50,10:20	MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 PG13 2;30,5:10,7:50,10:30

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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:10
PG-13

2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
11:30, 2:15, 5:00, 8:00, 10:45
PG-13

3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
1:30, 4:20, 7:10, 10:00
PG-13

4 AQUAMARINE
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
G

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

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NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 AQUAMARINE
11:15, 1:35, 3:50
6:05, 8:20, 10:35
GP

CINEMA 2 MI-3
11:05, 1:45, 4:25
7:05, 9:45
PG13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 MI-3
12:15, 2:55, 5:35
8:15, 10:50
PG13

CINEMA 4 MI-3
10:30, 1:10, 3:50
6:30, 9:10
PG13

CINEMA 5 MI-3
11:50, 2:20, 5:00
7:40, 10:20
PG13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

MAY 5 & 6, 2006	SHOW GIRLS	9:00PM
MAY 12 & 13, 2006	JAYA... OVER JOYED	9:00PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

MAY 1, 2006	DANCE NIGHT	7:00PM
MAY 4, 2006	JONNATHAN BADON	8:30PM
MAY 5 & 6 2006	WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL"	8:00PM

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AT THE CINEMAS
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Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

G1	GLORIETTA 1	1 AQUAMARINE	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 SILENT HILL	4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3
G4	GLORIETTA 4	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:40, 3:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
		4 AQUAMARINE	5 THE WILD	6 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	7 SILENT HILL
GB1	GREENBELT 1	1 SENTINEL	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
GB3	GREENBELT 3	1 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 2:35, 5:20, 8:05, 10:50 GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:15 GUARANTEED SEATS		
		3 AQUAMARINE 2:00, 4:20, 6:40, 9:00, 11:20 GUARANTEED SEATS	4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 1:55, 4:40, 10:10 GUARANTEED SEATS	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3 12:30, 3:15, 6:00, 8:45, 11:30 GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3		
		3 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	4 SILENT HILL	5 AQUAMARINE	
ACC	AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	3 NORTH COUNTRY	4 THE DARK
M2	MARKET! MARKET!	1 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	2 AQUAMARINE		
		3 SILENT HILL	4 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	5 MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 3	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Spark-Up Event May 9, 2006	JAMMIN with DISNEY Fashion Show May 13 & 14, 2006
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Kid's Daycare & After School Center's Culminating Activity May 12, 2006	Tribute to Moms May 15, 2006

GREENBELT
Dinner Theater
May 9 & 16, 2006

Greenbelt Onstage
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Special Guest: Mr. Mon David
May 12 & 13

Ayala MUSEUM
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For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 loc 29 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

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M:i:III
THE MISSION BEGINS MAY 3

NOW SHOWING AT ALL AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

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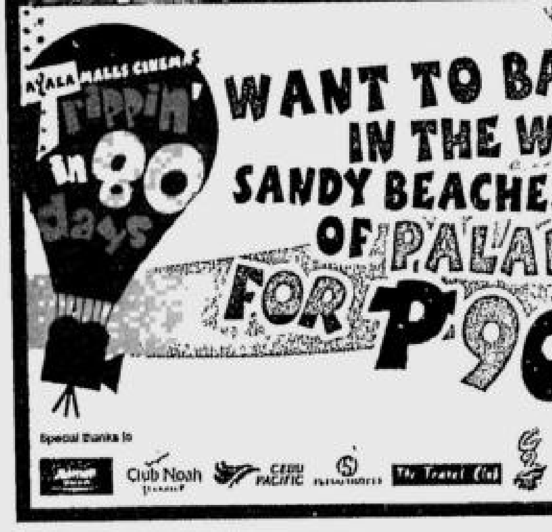
Or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservation

For screening schedule, pls. call 729-7777
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

United International Pictures glorietta GREENBELT AyalaMalls



AYALA MALLS CINEMAS
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It's Easy! Join Ayala Cinemas' Trippin in 80 Days Raffle Promo and get a chance to win exciting all-expense paid trips to Cebu, Davao, and Palawan.

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Promo ends on May 19, 2006
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-200, Series of 2006

Special thanks to
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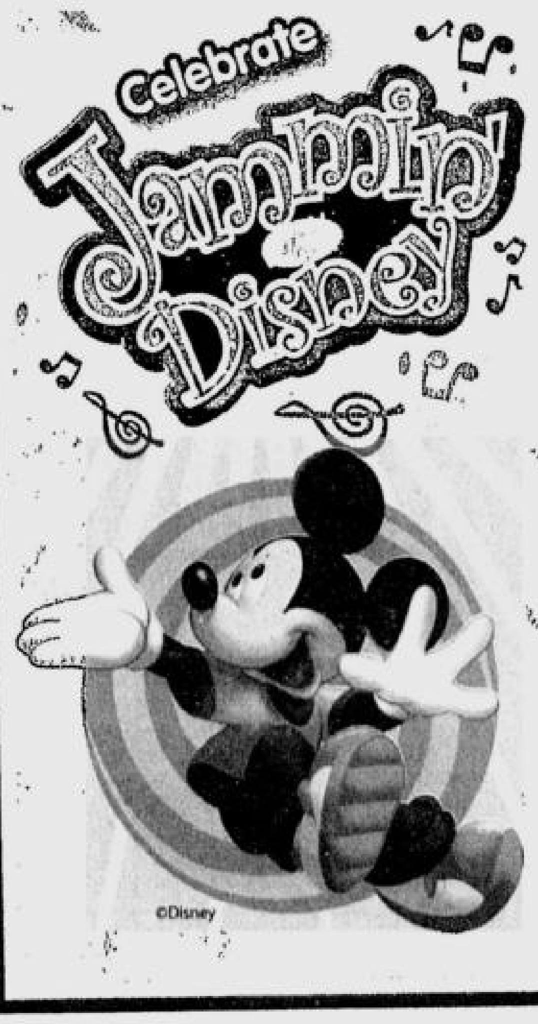

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ALABANG TOWN CENTER
May 4, 5, 6, & 7, 2006
May 4 & 5:
12 pm, 2 pm, 3:30 pm, 6 pm
May 6 & 7:
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Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline:
842-2782 • 772-1860

MARKET! MARKET!
May 11, 12, 13, & 14, 2006
12 pm, 2:30 pm, 4:30 pm, 6:30 pm
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline: 886-7519

AYALA CENTER CEBU
May 18, 19, 20, & 21, 2006
1 pm, 3 pm, 5 pm, 7 pm
Activity Center
Customer Service Hotline:
(032) 231-5342 loc 324

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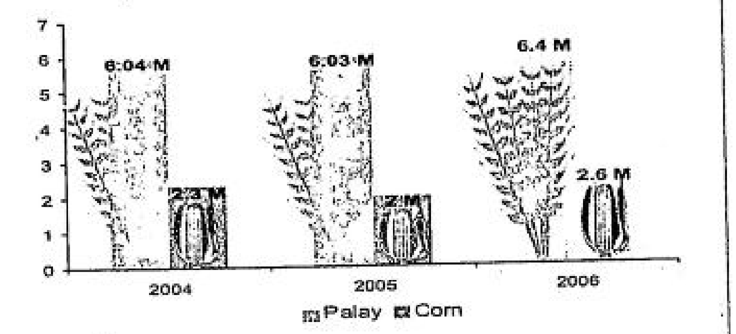
PETRON

Farm sector grew 5% in 1st quarter

INQUIRER MONITOR
Figures that matter in our nation's life

Palay and corn production estimates up for first half of 2006 (in million metric tons)

Palay and corn production are expected to grow by 5 and 33 percent, respectively, in the first half of 2006 from year-ago levels.



Source: Rice and Corn Situation and Outlook, January 2006
Bureau of Agricultural Statistics
Kato Pedroso PDI Research

Rice, fisheries production expanded by more than 7%

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR was estimated to have grown by 5 percent in the first quarter, a big leap from the 0.55-percent expansion in the same period last year.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo Panganiban said in an interview that he had reported to the government's economic managers that the agriculture sector, which accounts for a third of the gross domestic product (GDP), grew by about 4.9-5 percent. The official report will be released tomorrow.

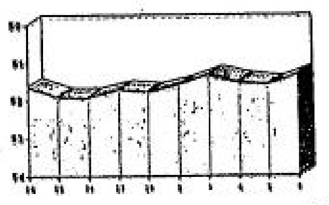
Panganiban said a growth driver for the first quarter aside from improved production of rice and corn was the aquaculture sector, especially in the Visayas region. Fishery production was estimated to have expanded by between 7 and 8 percent from January to March this year.

He said rice production in the first quarter increased by 7.6 percent, reversing the 1.5-percent decline in the same period in 2005.

FARM/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱51.33 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 8, 2006

¥113.82 = $1
As of 5 p.m., May 2, 2006

GOLD: **$680.20-680.70**
per ounce Hong Kong, May 8, 2006

Gov't raises growth forecasts for 2009-2010

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND Development Authority has revised upward its economic growth projections for 2009 and 2010, saying that the expected budget surpluses in those years could help pump-prime the economy.

The Neda originally projected that the country's gross domestic product (GDP) growth would settle at 6.2 and 6.3 percent in 2009 and 2010, respectively. But the economic agency said the the surpluses, which will be used to boost spending on infrastructure, would push GDP growth to 6.4 percent in 2009 and to a similar expansion rate in 2010.

Last year, the country registered a GDP growth of only 5.1 percent, lower than the official target of 5.3 to 6.3 percent.

The increase in the GDP growth rate projections was made following a statement from fiscal authorities that the excess cash in 2009 and 2010 would be allocated for investment initiatives, such as higher infrastructure spending.

The Neda said the new forecasts on GDP growth would be supported by an 8.9-percent year-on-year growth in investments in 2009 and a 9-percent

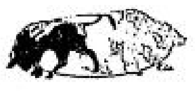
GOV'T/B2

WHAT'S INSIDE

Oil firm seeks changes to biofuels bill /B2

The next Philex /B4

BIR April collection seen up but short of goal /B6



19% JUMP IN 1ST QUARTER

Globe posts ₱3.5-B net profit

By Daxim L. Lucas

GLOBE TELECOM INC., THE COUNTRY's second-biggest telecommunications group, reported its best ever operating profit during the first quarter of 2006 due in part to a sharp increase in its subscribers.

The company also earned P3.5 billion during the first quarter, representing a 19-percent increase from the same period last year.

The performance also underscored the Ayala-controlled firm's continuing recovery, which started in the second half of last year after it was roundly trounced by rival Smart Communications Inc. for control of the lucrative wireless market.

In a statement released yesterday, Globe said that its strong first-quarter performance flowed from "its highest ever quarterly EBITDA and EBIT at P9.7 billion and P5.7 billion, respectively."

EBIDTA is finance jargon for "earnings before interest, depreciation, taxes and amortization" while EBIT is "earnings before interest and taxes"—more commonly known as operating profit.

Both measures of profitability reached historic high points, growing by 23 percent and 39 percent respectively from year-ago levels.

"These results build on the momentum that started in the second half of 2005 when Globe introduced various compelling value offers to its subscribers," the company said. "They also reflect continuing efforts to manage the company's cost of operations."

Last week, the company announced a 793,000 increase in the number of its subscribers for the first quarter to 13.2 million from only 12.4 million at the end of 2005.

The net additions reflected a significant turnaround from the previous quarter's net disconnections of about 6,000.

"We are delighted by the mar-

GLOBE/B2

5
An introduction to the power circle.
BMW 5 Series

The new BMW 520 Diesel.

- The advantage of a refined BMW Diesel.
  [illegible]
- The soul of a sports car.
  [illegible]
- The comfort of a luxury sedan.
  [illegible]

The new BMW 5 Series. Executive Arrival.

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Oil firm seeks changes to biofuels bill

Chevron says companies must not be held liable for damages due to fuel use

By Abigail L. Ho

OIL FIRM CHEVRON PHILIPPINES INC. has proposed amendments to the pending biofuels bill, one of which is the insertion of a non-accountability clause for oil companies and their retailers in case of engine damage due to biofuel use.

Although Chevron supports the government's alternative fuels program, the oil firm insists that oil firms and their retailers should not be held liable for any "damage to, or any other form of loss, to the vehicle or its parts."

Chevron submitted to the Senate a position paper covering the proposed amendments.

Major oil firms, including Chevron, earlier cited the accountability factor as one of the reasons why they were reluctant to sell pre-blended coco-biodiesel directly from their pumps.

They said that should anything happen to vehicle engines as a result of coco-biodiesel use, motorists could end up suing the oil firms or their retailers for selling the fuel.

The pending biofuels bill did not specify which entity would be held liable in case of engine damage.

Apart from the non-accountability provision, Chevron also proposed that the sale and use of coco-biodiesel and fuel ethanol should not be made mandatory.

The oil firm said that consumers should still have a choice in selecting the type of fuel they would want to use.

The 5-percent minimum blend requirement for ethanol, for example, should only be applied to "5 percent of the oil company's previous year's gasoline sales volume, as certified by the Department of Energy."

The pending biofuels bill would mandate the sale and use of a 1-percent blend of coco methyl ester (CME) for diesel, and a 5-percent blend of ethanol for gasoline.

Chevron said that, instead of requiring oil firms to transform all their fuel products into biofuels, the pending legislation should still allow motorists the chance to exercise freedom of choice, especially since older vehicle models would not be able to run on blended fuels.

The oil firm likewise is insisting on more performance tests to be conducted on coco-biodiesel and fuel ethanol to prove that the alternative fuels will not cause any damage to vehicle engines.

Chevron is aware that coco-biodiesel, in particular, has passed property standards tests performed by the US Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory. But the oil firm believes that not enough tests have been conducted that can clearly show the effects of alternative fuels on vehicle engines.

The long-term effect of biofuels on engines is of particular concern, Chevron said.

Comedy of terror

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

UNION BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES reportedly wants to buy International Exchange Bank and is offering an attractive premium for the purchase.

UBP belongs to the Aboitiz conglomerate, while i-Bank has a rather diverse band of bigtime stockholders.

UBP is offering the majority group in i-Bank a price of P42 a share.

To give this cute administration of Gloriaetta a rough idea of the sex appeal of such a price, the IPO price of i-Bank shares last year was only P16.

Look at that, just take a look at that! UBP is offering a price that is more than two and a half times the IPO price of i-Bank shares!

That's the kind of premium that majority stockholders in banks can command these days.

And what's more, UBP is offering to pay in CASH.

I just thought that the SSS and the GSIS should take note of the UBP offer.

* * *

From where we sit, meaning, the millions of working-class members of the SSS and the GSIS, the UBP offer only exposes the other well-known "deal" in banking these days.

That is none other than the proposal of the SM group of mall operator Henry Sy, as designed by his favorite offspring Tessie Sy-Coson.

She wants to "merge" the SM group's Banco de Oro, ranked 9th in terms of assets, with Equitable PCI Bank, the 3rd biggest.

While the market price of EPCIB shares was around P60 each, BDO assigned them in the "merger" proposal a valuation of P56. What? No premium?

But then again the SSS and the GSIS own roughly 40 percent of EPCIB.

If they bow to the wishes of the Sy family, they will become a negligible minority in the surviving bank, which is the much smaller BDO. They will be locked in for good.

What's more, they get pieces of paper—not CASH.

The UBP offer only uncovers the BDO designs for EPCIB as something laughable (to the business sector) but at the same time frightening (to the millions of working class SSS and GSIS members).

What's that—comedy of terror? For what does i-Bank have that EPCIB doesn't?

For the information of Malacañang, EPCIB has a lot more to offer a prospective buyer.

* * *

In fairness to SSS president Corazon dela Paz, when the SM group brought up the "merger" (i.e. takeover), Dela Paz questioned why the smaller BDO was the one absorbing the bigger EPCIB.

Dela Paz even noted that it should be the other way around—that EPCIB should be the surviving institution.

That was several months ago. It seems that Dela Paz changed her tune subsequently. The SSS now seems to take a different path from that of the GSIS.

GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia wants to sell the GSIS shares in EPCIB to the highest bidder.

The SSS perhaps should join the GSIS. Together they can perhaps get for the 3rd largest EPCIB even just the same deal as that of the much smaller i-Bank.

* * *

Napocor does it again. The state-owned power company just bungled the bidding for the second largest ticket in the government's privatization program this year. AGAIN!

Last week, you see, Napocor was scheduled to hold a public bidding for its 600-megawatt coal-fired power plant in Calaca, Batangas.

That was the second bidding. The first one, held in June last year, was already declared a "failed bidding."

Thanks, of course, to the incompetence of Napocor, the bidding turned into a comedy of errors. The prospective bidders found out that Napocor did not prepare for it.

For one, Napocor did not have the required "environmental clearance certificate."

Moreover, Napocor did not have the contracts with electricity distributors to buy power from the Calaca plant.

Who in his right mind would want to join such a messy bidding? Unless the bidder thought he was in a TV game.

The second bidding for the Calaca oil-fired power plant in Batangas failed.

Two bidders came. One of them went to the wrong venue.

How could such a stupid thing happen. Miscommunication?

This is the most important sale in this country this year. It's not as if they are just selling fake DVD in the freaking tiangge or something.

Next Mobile tries to draw in new users

By Daxim L. Lucas

RADIOPHONE OPERATOR NEXT MOBILE Inc. is embarking on an aggressive expansion plan which it hopes will boost its subscriber base to 300,000 users in five years from only 21,000 today.

At the same time, the firm is vying for a third-generation (3G) wireless network license from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), which has yet to award its last remaining franchise to an operator.

Speaking to reporters recently, Next Mobile vice president Edward Balontong said that up to 250,000 of the targeted subscriber base hike will come from a new phone service, which will allow users overseas to make calls to local counterparts without long distance charges.

The expansion plan comes after the company unveiled a P1.25-billion expansion in line with its backdoor listing on the local stock market via listed firm Cashrounds Inc.

Balontong said the new service, dubbed "global phone," will also provide unlimited inbound traffic and competitive IDD and international text rates of only P5 for messages to the US and Canada and P8 for those sent to the rest of the world.

The Next Mobile official said the new service would allow local users to have a "virtual presence" in 38 countries where the company's services are recognized.

The new service will initially use the Motorola i930 as its launching phone model. The unit can use both GSM and iDEN (integrated digital enhanced network) technologies, and will be bundled with a service that provides up to two Philippine mobile numbers and a choice of an overseas number.

The service will initially be priced at P1,500 a month for both postpaid and prepaid users.

Next Mobile president and chief operations officer Lambert Ramos said, meanwhile, that the company would not compete directly with telecommunications giants Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom Inc., and would instead focus on its niche.

Compensation mulled in the event of bird flu outbreak

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT IS STUDYING THE possibility of compensating backyard and commercial poultry farmers in the event of an avian flu outbreak.

By setting a standard price for the compensation of poultry farmers, the government will not be burdened by an excessive indemnification package as in other countries, according to the National Avian Influenza Task Force, led by the Department of Agriculture.

The task force is now preparing for the worst once the deadly avian flu hits the local poultry industry.

Agriculture Secretary Domingo F. Panganiban yesterday said that the affected farmers may get P35 to P40 per head.

Panganiban said the indemnification package is much bearable than that offered in other countries. He said that in Thailand, the government would pay $1 per head, which resulted in a $50-million headache for the country.

The package takes into account the computation of the live weight per kilo of chicken at the farm gate, which ranges from P65 to P68 per kilo, he said.

"We have to be careful also because there are not enough government funds," Panganiban said.

"The government will come up with an indemnification package if and when necessary," he added.

The multisectoral task force will see if the indemnification fee is acceptable to farmers and raisers.

Industry sources, however, doubt if the government can raise enough money—and quickly—for this component, in the event of an outbreak in poultry centers, where the number of chicken to be slaughtered can go up as high as four million heads for every three-kilometer radius.

According to a source in the Philippine Association of Broiler Integrators (Pabi), the group has tested the feasibility of this proposed indemnification program by plotting a three-kilometer radius in the poultry center of Minalin, Pampanga, to see how much money would be involved in compensating affected growers.

The source said that at the Minalin site alone, some P320 million will be required, based on an average of P80 per head. The group counted four million heads of chicken within the three-kilometer radius.

"More worrisome for the NAITF is when game-fowl farms fall within such a radius, given that top-grade fighting cocks cost as high as P20,000 to P30,000 per head," the source said.

Farm sector grew 5% in 1st quarter

From page B1

As higher rice yields were expected in the first quarter, the country's rice imports would be lower at 1.5 million to 1.6 million metric tons, or 300,000 tons lower than the originally planned 1.8 million metric tons, Panganiban added.

Rice output in the first three months of the year was estimated to have risen to 3.63 million tons due to favorable weather conditions.

Panganiban said the reported weakening of the La Niña weather phenomenon would be beneficial to the agriculture sector.

The Philippines' weather bureau Pagasa (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, Astronomical Services Administration) said Tuesday that the La Niña, which induces increased rainfall in the tropical Pacific, was already in the "decaying stage."

"The condition in the equatorial Pacific is getting warmer and has returned to normal conditions, which means La Niña is about to end," Flaviana Hilario, chief of the climatology and agrometeorology branch of the weather bureau, told a news briefing.

The end of the La Niña episode, which began late last year, would benefit the agriculture sector as the country was already approaching the rainy season, an agriculture official said.

"I understand the weather bureau also predicted an early onset of the rainy season. If that prediction comes true, that should still allow for an early harvest since farmers will be able to plant early," said Gregorio Tan, administrator of the National Food Authority.

Gov't raises growth forecasts for 2009-2010

From page B1

expansion in 2010.

In the past, the country's economy had been boosted largely by private consumption. But the Neda said government spending would be one of the main contributors to GDP growth once the government started posting a budget surplus.

The government has undergone a strict fiscal reform program in the hope of wiping out its yawning budget deficit, which has been a result of anemic tax collection.

Under the government's medium-term targets, the deficit should be reduced to P125 billion this year, to P63 billion next year, and to zero by 2008. The deficit stood at P146.8 billion last year.

After balancing its budget by 2008, the government aims to post a surplus of P12.14 billion in 2009 and P17 billion in 2010.

The goal of improving the government's fiscal position is anchored on several revenue-enhancing measures such as the Reformed VAT Law that took effect last November.

The VAT reform, considered the centerpiece of the Arroyo administration's fiscal reform agenda, is estimated to generate P75 billion in additional revenues this year alone.

Fiscal authorities said proceeds from the VAT would be used not only for deficit-reduction purposes but also for pump-priming initiatives. Of the P75 billion in additional revenues expected from the VAT this year, 30 percent will be spent on infrastructure, education and social services.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said earlier that the Department of Finance, tasked with managing the government's fiscal position, was not focused only on balancing the government's budget but also on generating more revenues that would complement the government's pump-priming activities.

Globe posts ₱3.5-B net profit

From page B1

ket's response to our initiatives and are encouraged by the results of the first quarter." Globe president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. said in a statement.

Globe said that its higher first-quarter income came despite the tripling of provisions for income tax year-on-year to P1.5 billion.

"The company's effective income tax rate increased from 15 percent to 31 percent with higher corporate tax rates and the expiry of Globe's tax holiday in March 2005," it said.

If the impact from mark-to-market and foreign exchange changes were to be excluded, the first-quarter net income would actually show a 40-percent annual increase.

Net service revenues of P14.2 billion were 5 percent higher than that reported during the same period last year, but lower by 3 percent quarter-on-quarter compared to revenues during the fourth quarter of 2005, reflecting peak seasonal demand.

Seair invests ₱10M for online booking

LOCAL CARRIER SOUTH EAST ASIAN Airlines has invested more than P10 million to implement an online booking and ticketing system.

The system is expected to generate a 30-percent growth in new business in the first year of implementation.

The airline has tapped local information technology firm stag Philippines Inc. to help develop the software solution.

"Our partnership with stag Philippines has led to the development of a cost-effective, tailor-made software solution that will help strengthen Seair's position in the travel industry and provide passengers with an easier, worry-free way of managing their travel schedules," Seair vice president for commercial affairs Patrick Tan said in a statement.

"This integrated Airline Reservation and Ticketing System is the result of four years' worth of research and development by a team of Filipino software engineers," he added.

The system, dubbed stag+ARTS, allows small and medium-sized airlines to computerize and centralize their reservation, ticketing and check-in procedures.

It also enables users to view Seair flight schedules, ticket prices and seat availability. They can also buy tickets online and pay using their MasterCard or Visa credit cards.

Once purchased, users can just generate a print-out of their e-tickets, eliminating the hassle of having to physically go to ticket offices.

Seair is currently flying to 18 local tourist destinations, including Caticlan, Cebu, Clark in Pampanga, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro, and Busuanga, Cuyo, El Nido, Puerto Princesa City and Rodriguez in Palawan.

It also flies to Siargao, Camiguin, Zamboanga, Jolo and Tawi-Tawi. *Abigail L. Ho*

Philamlife subsidiary releases ₱360M in education benefits

By Edgar Alejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—CLOSE TO 40,000 STUDENTS nationwide are expected to gain from the release of educational plan benefits worth over P360 million this coming schoolyear, according to a Philam Plans official.

Philam Plans, the education plan provider of Philamlife, has already begun releasing the benefits in separate payout schedules.

On April 29, Philam Plans paid a total of P169.6 million to 9,912 education plan beneficiaries, said Jesus Hofileña, president of the pre-need firm, during the opening here last week of the new offices of Philamlife and Philam Plans.

Of the total number of beneficiaries, 6,665 are college students, 2,049 are going to high school and 1,198 are elementary students.

On May 2, Philamlife launched its own scholarship benefit payout in all its service centers around the country. Over P204 million in education funds—in the form of bank checks, auto-credit transfer to Philam bank savings accounts—will go to Scholar Gold beneficiaries.

Holifeña said Philam Plans is the largest and most liquid trust fund in the industry.

Local interest rates too low, says BSP chief

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. yesterday said local interest rates based on the benchmark treasury bill yield had fallen "too low" and must bottom out to encourage peso-denominated savings.

Tetangco told reporters he was not too worried about this for now. But if the gap between domestic and US interest rates would continue to widen, he said it would encourage savings in foreign currency.

Tetangco said it was not the BSP's overnight rates but the T-bill rates whose spreads had turned negative. This means the rates should rise to make peso-denominated assets more attractive.

He noted, however, that in the past two auctions, T-bill rates had started inching up up.

As of the last auction, the average 91-day T-bill rate rose to 4.768 percent from the previous week's 4.62 percent while the average yield of the 184-day bill increased by 24.5 basis points to 5.582 percent. The average yield of the one-year tenor slightly dipped to 5.799 percent from 5.81 percent a week ago.

"The recent movements in the Treasury bill yields suggest that the rates are near-bottom and are about to reverse its course," Banco de Oro Universal Bank chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said in his weekly commentary.

He said the recent movements were viewed as mere technical rebounds after a steady decline in yields since January 2005. For the 91-day T-bill, he said a break to the 5 percent level could signal a more pronounced move toward 5.25 percent in the near-term.

Based on a recent report to the Monetary Board, the after-tax differentials between the 91-day T-bills and US 90-day LIBOR and the US 90-day T-bill rate widened and remained negative at 139.69 basis points and 101 basis points, respectively, as of April 17. *Doris C. Dumlao*

BDO seen building up capital base

Hike to ₱30B to enable bank to comply with stiffer rules

By Doris C. Dumlao

SY

RETAIL TYCOON HENRY SY'S BANCO de Oro Universal Bank plans to beef up its authorized capital by P10 billion from the present level of P20 billion in line with its expansion program.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, BDO spokesperson Elmer Serrano also said the bank's board of directors had approved a program to issue P5 billion in fresh long term negotiable certificates of deposits (LTNCDs).

LTNCDs are negotiable certificates of deposit indicating an amount of indebtedness of a bank with a designated maturity. These represent the bank's obligation to pay the LTNCD's face value upon maturity and the specified coupon or interest quarterly during the life of the certificate of deposit.

Last year, the bank issued P5 billion worth of five-year LTNCDs in two tranches, seeking to diversify the maturity profile of its deposits to fund its asset growth. These instruments cater to individuals and corporations in search of a superior investment alternative.

LTNCDs are negotiable and can be liquidated anytime at the current market price. They are also covered by insurance from the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corp. They may be purchased for a minimum of P100,000.

LTNCDs enable the issuers to mobilize savings and encourage long-term investments for individual investors. The investment is exempted from withholding tax if held up to maturity.

As a deposit hybrid, the LTNCDs are competitively priced, carrying a premium over the 3-month treasury bill benchmark rate (MART1).

In the meantime, BDO, which is on an expansion mode, is raising its capital base in view of stiffer accounting and capital adequacy rules. The bank will present the increase in capital for ratification during its annual stockholders meeting on May 26.

After acquiring the Philippine operations of United Overseas Bank of Singapore, BDO is now seeking a merger with Equitable PCI Bank. BDO's parent, the SM Group, is the single biggest stockholder of EPCIB with a 34 percent interest.

As of end-2005, BDO is the Philippines' sixth biggest bank with assets of P233.4 billion while third placer EPCIBank has about P316.4 billion.

Atlas eyes $40M in financing

By Christine A. Gaylican

ATLAS CONSOLIDATED MINING & DEVElopment Corp. said it would receive a $40-million financing package from investment fund Crescent Asian Special Opportunities Portfolio (Casop).

Casop will infuse $33 million into Carmen Copper Corp., a 100-percent owned subsidiary of Atlas that will take charge of its Toledo copper mining operations in Toledo, Cebu.

"The infusion will be made in two tranches: A $5-million convertible bond and $28 million for subscription to new shares upon the finalization of a senior debt instrument and an off-take agreement for the copper project," Atlas told the stock exchange in a disclosure.

Casop will also buy for $7 million a portion of Atlas' outstanding debt, which will be converted into Atlas shares worth P10 each.

"The proceeds from the convertible bond will initially be used to remove water in the underground mine in preparation for its rehabilitation. The infusion may earn the investors around 34 percent of Carmen Copper," it added.

"This equity infusion is designed to improve Carmen's valuation during our IPO later this year as the project will be at an advanced stage once shares are offered to the public. We are delighted that this group appreciates the potential of Atlas and the mining industry, in general," said company president and chair Alfredo C. Ramos in a phone interview.

The Toledo Copper mine has been producing copper since 1955 from several underground and open pit mines (past production is 5.7 million tons of copper and 2 million ounces of gold in concentrates).

Atlas has extracted 220 MT of ore since 1964. At its peak production, Atlas was the third largest copper producer in the world (1979-1984). Mining was suspended in 1994 following a super typhoon that flooded the Carmen open pit and subsequently the Carmen underground mine.

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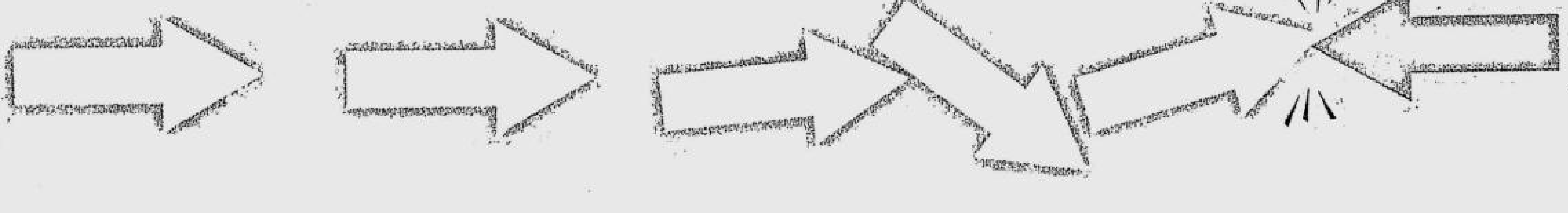

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The next Philex

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

HERE IS THE CONCLUSION OF MY BRONtosaurus. It differs from the previous weeks because in every case, an extra letter has been added to each word. This will result in a change of meaning but will convey new ideas so that these words will eventually find their way into future dictionaries:

1. Bozone—an atmospheric layer surrounding stupid people that stops bright ideas from penetrating.
2. IPOD—a 3-legged stool (tripod) from which 2 legs have been removed.
3. Foreploy —any misdirection about yourself for the purpose of getting laid.
4. Cashtration—the act of buying a house, rendering the buyer financially impotent.
5. Girafitti—vandalism, spray-painted very, very high.
6. Sarkchasm—the gulf between the sarcastic author and the person who doesn't get it.
7. Inoculatte—to take coffee intravenously
8. Osteopornosis—a degenerate disease.
9. Karmageddon—when everyone is giving off bad vibes.
10. Glibido —all talk and no action.
11. Dopeler effect—the tendency of ideas to become smarter when they come at you rapidly.
12. Arachnoleptic fit—the frantic dance performed just after you have walked through a spider's web.
13. Beelzebug—Satan in the form of a mosquito that gets into your bedroom and cannot be cast out.
14. Caterpallor—the color you turn after finding a worm in the fruit you are eating.
15. Ignoranus—a person who is both stupid and an ass.

* * *

Before I get to the part that you are all dying to read, I must comment on the extraordinary gain in the Phisix during the past week. Analysts are attributing it to the fall in inflation from 7.7 percent to 7.1 percent in April but this was pretty obvious, given that agricultural production had risen substantially due to higher rainfall. Food prices are an important component in calculating the inflation rate so it shall not have come as a surprise to anyone.

Another reason given was that the central bank had maintained interest rates. Why would they increase them ahead of the FED next week, especially as Chair Bernanke indicated that interest rate increases might be coming to an end shortly. Neither of the explanations given above convinces me.

After the bullish statement from ADB about the growth of the Asian region, compared with the First World countries, fund managers worldwide decided to do some research. They discovered that Europe was growing by about 1.8 percent a year, Japan by a forecast of 2.4 percent, and the US by 3.5 percent.

Then they looked at China, which is growing at 9.5 percent in spite of the government's efforts to gradually slow the economy. India is also growing rapidly at 7.6 percent and aspires to a double-digit growth in the years ahead. Singapore is growing at 9.1 percent and even the Philippines produced a growth rate of 5.5 percent in the 1st quarter, so ASIA is clearly the place to be. On this point, I do not think there is any dissension, so a target of 2,600 or more on the Phisix is clearly attainable.

Fund managers have been siphoning their daily funds into the Asian markets when Japan, by far the largest market, was closed for three days for a holiday from Wednesday. On Friday, nearly all the Asian markets were on vacation leaving the Philippines almost alone. So some money, which would otherwise have been spread around, came into Manila instead.

Here are some figures for the net foreign buying as stated in my newsletter: BPI-P302M, FLI-P270M, AC-P269M, ALI-P260M, TEL-P206M, and MWC-P124M. If you convert these figures into dollars, they are quite modest, but our market is so tiny compared to all the other stock exchanges, that the effect was dramatic. I do not believe that such a large move is justified and with the risk factor at 100, I am advising investors in first liners to sell on the first sign of weakness. But they should not to sell in a rising market, as my first rule is NEVER GO AGAINST THE TREND. The Bull Run or gallop continued on Monday with a further rise of 119 points to 2,590 and the market is becoming euphoric. I expect a correction this week. Here are some reasons why:

The governor of the central bank said the prognosis of many feel that oil prices will go higher. If there are second-round effects such as wage increases, then of course the central bank will have to do something. That means raising, borrowing and lending rates. It is an absolute certainty that there will be wage increases as the last P25 increase a year ago has been eroded by inflation so workers need another P30 to P40 to compensate. Of course, they will ask for more but industry cannot afford it and there may be strikes.

Bank of America raised its forecast for Philippine economic expansion from 4.7 percent to 5.3 percent this year after the agricultural and economic planning ministers announced faster-than-expected growth. This was not due to any action by the government but to higher rainfall. "It is mainly agriculture. The other industries are quite subdued. Their performance is improving but not aggressively."

MOODY'S is resisting government calls to improve its NEGATIVE outlook on the nation's debt rating until revenue targets are met to help cut the country's budget deficit. "The Philippines needs to meet its target of P75 billion in extra revenue from VAT changes this year and cut the deficit to 2.1 percent of GDP. We will see how things develop but we can't do it this year. We are only four months into the fiscal year."

We will continue to run a trade deficit, as our exports compare unfavorably with every other Asian country. We have experienced a long period of political tranquility but this is unlikely to last much longer.

In the US, the dollar has been extremely weak over the past two months on the expectation that interest-rate hikes are coming to an end. Although the US is the world's biggest economy, it has to cope with a budget deficit, a huge and growing trade deficit, a never-ending war in Iraq, record oil prices and a major problem with Iran. I believe the dollar will continue to decline, in which case, commodities, especially gold, will remain buoyant.

This brings me to my recommendation, but since I have used up all my space, I will write about it later this week. I promise. It is better to delay it for a day than to gloss over it and omit all the relevant facts and calculations.

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Philcomsat meet can proceed–SEC

THE COMMISSION EN BANC OF THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission has allowed the group led by Manuel Nieto, president of Philcomsat Holdings Corp. and the Presidential Commission on Good Government to hold a special stockholders' meeting today.

The meeting was called to extend the corporate life of PHC, which was supposed to end May 10.

At the same time, the nominations and elections committee of PHC has recognized the validity of the proxies presented by shareholder Victor Africa, according to SEC director Jose Aquino, who concurrently sits as chair of the PHC Nomelec.

Sources said the issuance of the two separate orders would add drama to PHC's special stockholders meeting scheduled today.

Shareholders of Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp., Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat) and PHC have been embroiled in an almost decade-long legal feud for control of the three companies.

On one side is the group of 90-year-old PHC president Manuel Nieto Jr., and on the other are the Ilusorio and Africa families as well as Sen. Juan Ponce-Enrile.

The Africa group, one of the founding shareholders of Philcomsat have claimed that the feud started when the Nieto group in 1998 allegedly converted a social gathering into a stockholders meeting that installed the Nieto group in the board of Philcomsat.

Another version recounted that the feud started with the second generation of shareholders in the Philcomsat Group due to sibling rivalry. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Metro Pacific back in black, nets ₱23.2M

First Pacific unit cites growth of 2 firms

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

METRO PACIFIC CORP. (MPC), A SUBsidiary of Hong Kong's First Pacific Co. Ltd., turned around its finances in the first quarter, posting a profit of P23.2 million from a loss of P84.4 million in the same period last year.

Metro Pacific told the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) that the improvement was mainly due to higher gross profit contributions from two subsidiaries.

Metro Pacific also recognized as profit some P58.8 million in what used to be set aside as provision for losses.

Metro Pacific's consolidated revenues increased 8 percent during the first quarter of 2006 to P755.4 million from P698.3 million in the same period last year.

On the other hand, consolidated cost of sales fell 7 percent to P625.7 million in the first quarter from P671.2 million the prior year.

Financing charges also dropped 23 percent to P33.5 million during the first quarter of 2006 compared with P43.5 million reported in the same quarter last year.

Operating expenses increased 41 percent to P143.2 million from the same period in 2005, but were manageable enough against the growth in revenues.

Property subsidiary Landco Pacific Corp. (Landco) and Negros Navigation Co. (Nenaco) also performed within expectations during the quarter.

No figures were disclosed, however.

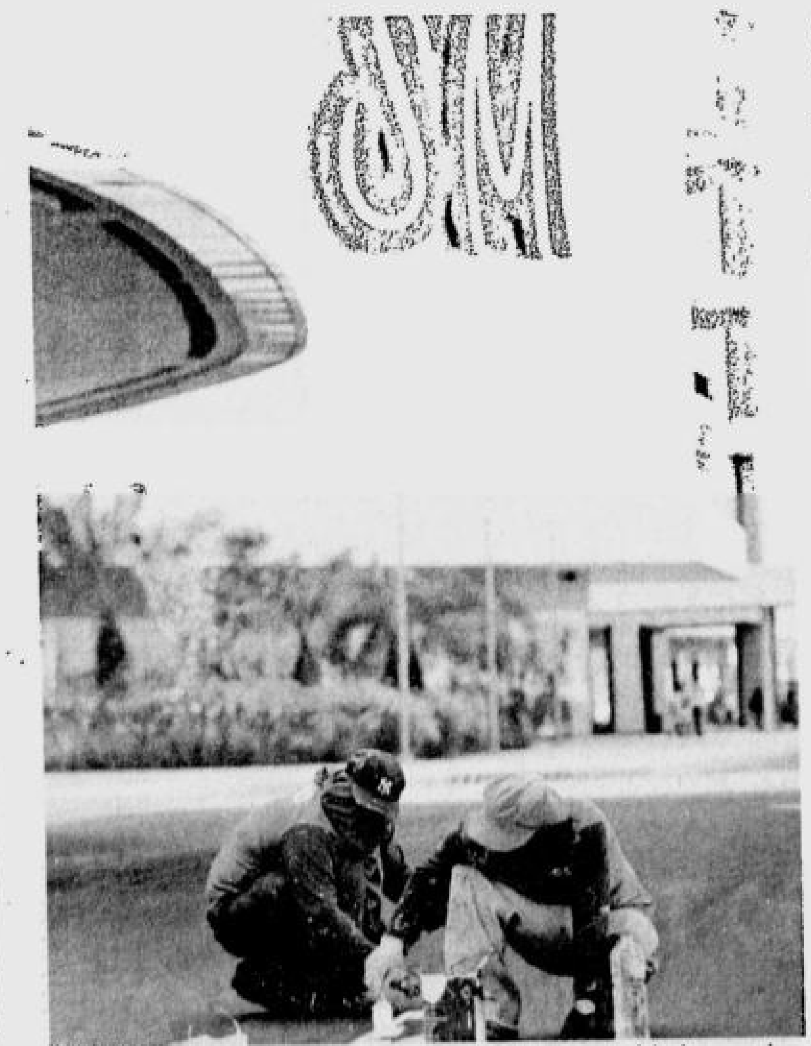
MPC's board also approved yesterday the sale of MPC's 51-percent stake in Landco for P667.7 million to Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) in line with the group's reorganization plan.

The MPC Group had said it was embarking on a comprehensive three-pronged corporate reorganization plan that would raise for it as much as P2.7 billion in new capital and allow the group to make investments within and outside the property sector.

Landco is currently on an aggressive five-year growth plan that calls for more investments not just in real estate, but in other promising opportunities.

"With our recently concluded debt workout and the improving prospects of our businesses, we are determined to build a strong platform for MPIC—a new company that can raise substantial capital, make significant investments, and become an engine for long-term value creation," said Jose Ma. K. Lim, MPC president.

SM Prime income hit ₱1.34B in Q1



SM Prime Holdings eyes further growth in revenues with the opening of Mall of Asia, one of the region's largest in Manila. REUTERS

SM PRIME HOLDINGS INC., the country's biggest shopping mall developer and operator, said its net income in the first quarter climbed 8 percent to P1.34 billion.

SM Prime told the Philippine Stock Exchange that the increase was largely due to rental revenues from new malls.

Net income in the same quarter last year was P1.24 billion.

SM Prime said revenues grew 15 percent in the January to March period this year to P2.85 billion from P2.5 billion in the same period last year.

Rental revenues accounted for the lion's share of revenues, growing 15 percent to P2.35 billion from P2.04 billion.

The growth was driven by rentals from new SM Supermalls opened in the second half of 2005 and early this year.

Malls added to SM Prime's network were SM City San Lazaro in Manila, SM Supercenter Valenzuela, SM Supercenter Molino in Cavite and SM City Sta. Rosa in Laguna.

These new malls currently have an average occupancy level of 95 percent.

Cinema ticket sales, on the other hand, were up 20 percent due to more blockbuster films in 2006 compared to the same period in 2005.

Income from operations rose 22 percent to P1.71 billion from P1.4 billion in 2005.

Revenues are expected to increase even more this year with the opening of more malls this year.

These are the Mall of Asia, SM City Clark, SM City Lipa, SM Supercenter Frontera Verde, and SM City North Edsa Annex-3.

The SM group's total mall floor area will increase to 3.5 million square meters this year from 2.8 million square meters at the end of last year. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of May 8, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	6.6	7.1	6.6	7.1	578,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	37	38	36.5	38	810,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	72.5	70	71.5	7,139,100
China Banking Corp.	860	860	840	840	3,970
Citystate Savings Bank	20.25	20.25	20.25	20.25	500
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.46	7,350,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	72.5	74	72.5	73.5	373,300
International Exch. Bank	39.5	40.5	39.5	40	191,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	42.5	48	42.5	47	9,006,400
Philippine National Bank	35	36.5	35	36.5	77,400
Phil. Savings Bank	38	39.5	38	39.5	1,200
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	17	17	16.75	17	162,800
Security Bank Corp.	54	57.5	54	57	317,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	45	45	43.5	45	166,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
Bankard Inc.	0.78	0.78	0.78	0.78	100,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	32	31	32	6,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	3350	3375	3350	3360	790
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	30,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	205	205	205	205	2,100
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2130	2130	2120	2120	510
Ivantage Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.32	1.36	29,356,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	45	45.5	45	45	4,279,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	46.5	47.5	46.5	47	1,812,800
Manila Electric Co. A	13.75	14	13.75	14	128,500
Manila Electric Co. B	20.25	21.5	20.25	21.5	1,937,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	7.8	8.3	7.6	8.2	10,720,000
Petron Corp.	4.7	5.1	4.7	5	27,873,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	600,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.98	1.02	0.98	1.02	290,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	9,000
CADP Group Corp.	3	3	3	3	1,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	211,200
Jollibee Foods Corp.	36.5	37	36.5	37	428,100
Pancake House Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.05	4.1	46,000
RFM Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	500,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	3.1	3.1	2.95	3	1,326,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64.5	115,200
San Miguel Corp. B	84	84	82.5	84	698,300
Universal Robina Corp.	23	23.75	23	23.5	9,249,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	200,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.38	12,660,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.8	1.88	1.8	1.88	8,295,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	1.3	1.5	1.3	1.5	70,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	5.1	5.3	5	5.2	9,989,000
Republic Cement Corp.	1.36	1.56	1.36	1.5	739,000
CHEMICALS					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.74	0.74	0.74	0.74	130,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.1	28,700,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.075	3,900,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.45	0.59	0.45	0.54	1,390,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.008	66,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.0085	0.009	0.0085	0.009	40,000,000
Ayala Corp.	430	475	430	472.5	907,780
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	300,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	6.3	6.9	6.3	6.8	7,155,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.75	1,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.026	0.026	13,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	4.05	4.05	3.9	3.9	4,864,000
APC Group Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.235	0.235	1,060,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	264,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.06	1.1	5,885,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	2	1.7	2	184,000
ATN Holdings Inc. B	2	2	2	2	10,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	1.18	1.18	1.18	1.18	40,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.4	9.4	9.4	9.4	98,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.16	1.2	1.14	1.18	56,997,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	4.85	5.4	4.85	5.3	16,597,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.75	4.05	3.75	3.8	7,642,000
House Of Investments Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.48	1.48	10,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	7.7	7.9	7.5	7.6	530,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	50,000
Pacifica	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.012	7,300,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	35,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.61	0.61	0.61	0.61	100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.15	0.155	5,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	240	255	238	252.5	719,470
South China Resources Inc.	0.86	0.86	0.85	0.85	100,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co	0.0725	0.0725	0.07	0.07	10,400,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.13	0.13	4,720,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	14.75	15	14.75	14.75	24,115,100
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
Belle Corp.	1.36	1.4	1.34	1.36	18,066,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.3	0.32	0.3	0.32	2,800,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	2.34	2.42	2.32	2.42	2,221,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.78	1.92	1.78	1.88	699,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.24	200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	600,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	200,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.68	0.73	0.68	0.72	126,760,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.028	0.03	0.028	0.029	2,900,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.67	0.71	0.66	0.68	570,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.7	1.88	1.7	1.88	27,066,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.1	3.2	3	3	150,000
Interport Res.	0.007	0.007	0.0065	0.0065	25,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	31,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.27	0.28	0.26	0.26	400,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.65	0.65	0.6	0.6	550,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.68	1.9	1.68	1.86	139,394,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.29	0.26	0.28	83,030,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	200,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	11.25	12	11.25	12	1,552,300
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	8,350,000
SM Development Corp.	1.78	1.8	1.76	1.78	863,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8.3	9.1	8.3	9	39,571,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.125	0.125	0.115	0.12	6,440,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	14.75	15	14.5	14.5	416,300
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	10,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.32	1.36	1.3	1.32	37,565,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	990	1035	990	1030	64,400
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	3.25	3.35	3.25	3.35	8,701,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2140	2295	2140	2255	334,640
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.21	0.23	0.21	0.23	12,670,000
Ionics Inc.	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	45,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.05	0.05	0.048	0.05	19,100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.12	1.12	141,000
Philweb Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	156,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	3	3.05	3	3.05	541,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	47,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	14.25	14.5	14.25	14.25	1,729,700
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	33,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Acesite Phils Hotel Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	1,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.74	1.76	1.72	1.74	1,491,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	1,550,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.63	0.66	5,230,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.25	3.35	3.2	3.3	625,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.2	2.3	2.14	2.16	1,403,000
Paxys Inc.	11	11	10.5	10.75	1,129,600
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	2.85	3.05	2.85	2.95	7,799,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	2.9	3.05	2.9	2.95	2,696,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	195,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	8.2	8.2	8	8	5,217,000
Benguet Corp. A	12.5	13	12	12.5	79,500
Benguet Corp. B	30	30	30	30	100
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.9	1.9	1.84	1.84	170,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.38	0.39	0.37	0.37	26,810,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.42	0.43	0.39	0.4	17,920,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.025	307,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	100,200,000
Omico Corp.	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.008	257,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	4.25	4.4	4.05	4.15	16,575,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	4.3	4.4	4.15	4.3	15,194,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	29	30.5	29	29.5	455,100
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.45	0.45	0.45	0.45	100,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.66	0.69	0.64	0.66	3,740,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.29	3,910,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	828,900,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	140,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	1.38	1.4	1.24	1.26	3,423,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	1.46	1.46	1.22	1.26	1,159,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	11	11.25	10.25	10.75	1,152,900

CURRENCIES

May 8, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.785238	1.000000	51.5170
Japan	Yen	0.006982	0.008892	0.4581
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460149	1.859500	95.7959
Hongkong	Dollar	0.101296	0.129001	6.6457
Switzerland	Franc	0.640539	0.815727	42.0238
Canada	Dollar	0.710301	0.904568	46.6006
Singapore	Dollar	0.499960	0.636699	32.8008
Australia	Dollar	0.604773	0.770179	39.6773
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.083024	2.652731	136.6607
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.209369	0.266631	13.7360
Brunei	Dollar	0.498374	0.634679	32.6968
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000090	0.000114	0.0059
Thailand	Baht	0.020850	0.026553	1.3679
Uae	Dirham	0.213798	0.272272	14.0266
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.273500	65.6069
Argentina	Peso	0.258302	0.328947	16.9464
Brazil	Real	0.381479	0.485814	25.0277
Denmark	Kroner	0.134093	0.170768	8.7975
India	Rupee	0.017531	0.022326	1.1502
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.217819	0.277393	14.2905
Mexico	New Peso	0.071676	0.091280	4.7025
New Zealand	Dollar	0.503196	0.640820	33.0131
Norway	Kroner	0.128370	0.163479	8.4219
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013085	0.016664	0.8585
South Africa	Rand	0.129588	0.165030	8.5019
Korea	Won	0.000836	0.001065	0.0549
Sweden	Kroner	0.107450	0.136838	7.0495
Syria	Pound	0.015127	0.019264	0.9924
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.024881	0.031686	1.6324
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000366	0.000466	0.0240

CENTRAL NEGROS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Bacolod City
Tel. No. (034) 435-3641 - 55 • Fax No. (034) 435-4079

INVITATION TO A PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE AND SEALED BIDDING

Interested parties are hereby invited to a **PRE-QUALIFICATION CONFERENCE** and **SEALED BIDDING** for the **SUPPLY** of the following:

1. THIRTY (30) PCS. POWER CAPACITOR, DOUBLE BUSHING 100KVAR, 7620 VOLTS, BIL95KV, 60 HZ SINGLE PHASE, BRAND NEW.
2. FIFTEEN (15) PCS. POWER CAPACITOR, DOUBLE BUSHING 150KVAR, 7620 VOLTS, BIL95KV, 60 HZ. SINGLE PHASE. BRAND NEW.
3. STEEL POLES OF VARIOUS SIZES, 30', 35', 75', 80' 85' & 90'. HOT DIPPED GALVANIZED; 100 MICRONS.
4. CONDUCTORS: POLY INSULATED AAC#6; DUPLEX WIRE ACSR#6 & TW WIRE #10.
5. SERVICE DEAD END GRIP #6; SPOOL INSULATOR 1 3/8"; COMPRESSION CONNECTOR 28AU, BURNDY & ROUND METER BASE SOCKET 100 AMP. 1" HUB, 4 JAWS WITH SEALING RING, BRAND G.E. OR ITS EQUIVALENT.

A pre-qualification conference will be held on the following date and time stated below at the 3rd floor, CENECO Main Building, corner Gonzaga & Mabini Streets, Bacolod City, where all other related matters and technical description and specification will be discussed.

ITEM NO.	DATE	TIME
1 & 2	MAY 25, 2006	10:00 A.M.
3	MAY 25, 2006	2:00 P.M.
4 & 5	MAY 26, 2006	10:00 A.M.

Only qualified bidders who were present during the pre-qualification conference will be allowed to participate in the bidding.

Sealed bid must be accompanied by Bid Security equivalent to 5% of the total bid price in the form of cash, certified cheque, manager's cheque, or surety bond issued by a surety or insurance company valid for at least one hundred twenty (120) days.

Sealed bids must be received on or before June 13, 2006 for item no. 1, 2 & 3. and on June 14, 2006 for items 4 & 5, 10:00 A.M. at the above address at which time and place the said proposal will be opened and read in the presence of bidder's representative.

Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the Procurement Section at the 2nd Floor CENECO Main Building, phone No. 435-3641 to 55 local 236.

The Central Negros Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CENECO) hereby reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any minor disclosing any reason, to waive any minor defects or infirmities therein, and to accept such bids as may be deemed advntageous to CENECO.

(Sgd.) **NORIEL A. BERMUDEZ**
O.I.C. General Manager

(PDI – May 8, 9 & 10, 2006)

(2) ARCHITECTS

- Newly graduates
- 2-3 years experience and site experience, knowledge in AUTOCAD, 3D Max, and Adobe Photoshop

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fax : 0096614550712
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OBITUARIES

Death Notice

JOSEPHINE NIEZ
Died on May 5, 2006

Her body lies at Paz-Sucat, Parañaque. Cremation will be on May 10, 2006 after the 9 a.m. Mass.

DR. NELLY B. BELOSO
Division Superintendent of Sorsogon
Peacefully joined her Creator on May 4, 2006

Her mother; brother **Fr. Beloy**; sisters **Chod** and **Viv**; nieces, request relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Interment will be on May 13, 2006, 2:00 p.m. at Bonga Catholic Cemetery, Bonga, Bacacay.

I have fought the good fight,
I have finished the race, I have kept
the faith (2 Timothy 4)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Pilar
Province of Abra

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: May 9, 2006
Contract ID No.: **SP-086-IN-01**
World Bank Loan No.: 4446PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the ***Construction of 2 storey, 8 classroom school building***. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The ***Municipality of Pilar, Abra*** invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the ***Construction of 2 storey 8 classroom school building*** *consists of* ***Site works, concrete works, masonry works, carpentry/ceiling works, roofing, doors and windows, finishing works, plumbing works, electrical works and others.***
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting **May 8, 2006 - June 6, 2006** ***during office hours at the BAC Secretariat at the Municipal Session Hall of Pilar, Abra*** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***Five Thousand Pesos only (Php. 5,000.00)*** or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ***ninety (90) days*** after bid opening and must be accompanied by bid security of ***One Hundred Ninety Five Thousand Pesos (Php. 195,000.00)*** in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency and shall be delivered to the ***BAC Secretariat at the Municipal Session Hall, Municipal Building, Pilar, Abra on or before June 6, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at*** which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. A pre-bid conference will be held on ***May 23, 2006 at 10:00 a.m. at the Session Hall, Municipal Building of Pilar, Abra.***

(Sgd.) **MARIVIC A. CARSOLA**
BAC Chairman

(PDI - May 9, 2006)

PNOC ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, 1200 Taguig City, Philippines
P.O. Box 2102 MCPO, Tel. Nos 893-6001 to 47/893-1320 Fax No. 840-1575

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites interested contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project:

SUPPLY, FABRICATION AND DELIVERY OF THREE (3) UNITS SEMI-ELLIPSOIDAL HEAD AND UPPER SEPARATOR VESSEL SHELL FOR THE TONGONAN-1 PRODUCTION FIELD (SP-150, SP-160 AND SP-170)
EDC 06-045

The Approved Budget is P5,152,544.15 chargeable against PNOC-EDC fund. The contract duration is 60 calendar days.

Application Forms for Eligibility and Bid Documents may be secured from the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group (c/o N.A. Nicolasora) starting **May 9, 2006** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Pesos: One Thousand Pesos (Php1,000.00).

For the purpose of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on **May 23, 2006, 10:00 a.m.** at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, PNOC-EDC, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

Applications for Eligibility and sealed bids shall be received by the PNOC-EDC Contracts Administration Group at PNOC-EDC, 1st Floor Building 5, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City, Metro Manila, **not later than 2:00 p.m. on June 6, 2006** and shall be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to abort the bidding process, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder whose bid is considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC.

BAC CHAIRMAN

(PDI–May 9, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

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PRPA LICENSE NO. M-06-00-127
TIN NO. 244-040-084-000

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pursuant to the Labor Code and the Omnibus Rules Implementing the Code.

This license shall be valid for the period 04 May 2006 to 03 May 2008 unless sooner revoked, cancelled or suspended for violation of the Labor Code and related issuances. Transfer or use by any other person or entity renders this license null and void.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Official Seal of National Capital Region Department of Labor and Employment, to be affixed at the City of Manila, Philippines, this 4th day of May 2006.

(Sgd.) RICARDO S. MARTINEZ, Sr., CESO III
Regional Director

(Renewal of this license is thirty (30) days before expiration date)

(PDI - May 9, 2006)

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INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

LTO INSIDE WINDSHIELD VALIDATION STICKERS AND PLATE YEAR TAGS FOR 2006

The Land Transportation Office, through the General Fund (Funds 101) intends to apply the sum of Ten Million Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (P10,500,000.00) being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of payment for supply and delivery of ***2006 inside windshield validation stickers and plate year tags*** for the use of Sectoral Head Office and Regional Offices. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The Land Transportation Office now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the items. The required delivery schedule will be indicated in the approved Contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184, otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the BAC Sub-Committee and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Php10,000.00 in the form of cash. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The Land Transportation Office will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on May 16, 2006 at 10:00 A.M. at the LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City.

Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before May 29, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. All bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in any of the following form.

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid.
1. Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank guarantee	One and a half Percent (1 ½%)
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half Percent (2 ½%)
4. Foreign government guarantee	One hundred percent (100%)

Late Bids shall not be accepted.

Bid opening shall be on May 29, 2006 at 2:00 P.M. at LTO-Library, East Avenue, Quezon City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Land Transportation Office reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Land Transportation Office
Atty. Jimmy G. Pesigan – Chairman, BAC
East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 9219077 – Telefax

Engr. Roberto S. Se – Chairman, BAC Sub-Committee
Property Section, LTO, East Avenue, Quezon City
(02) 9292015 – Telefax

(Sgd.) ATTY. JIMMY G. PESIGAN
BAC – Chairman

(PDI - May 9, 2006)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5291

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND REBID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

5kV and 15kV Medium Voltage Switchgears under FGJ 50986
Approved Budget - PHP 2,525,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Harold T. Fontillas** starting May 9, 2006, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P300.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **May 17, 2006, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply Management Department at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management Department Office Wall Clock Time) of May 24, 2006**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee II

(PDI - May 9 & 16, 2006)

People, Events & Products

3D workshops at APC

ASIA PACIFIC COLLEGE IS OFFERING 3D workshops for the whole month of May. High school students interested in pursuing a degree in multimedia arts and wanting to pursue a career in animation will greatly benefit from these beginner's modules. The workshops are open to all interested applicants 16 years old and above. The first module is the 3D Character Modelling Workshop (begins May 8) that will teach the basics of sculpting in 3D. The module of Introduction to Texturing, Surfacing and Lighting begins on May 15 that will teach simulation of real world materials and texturing of 3D models. From May 22 onwards, the Basic 3D Animation Workshop will commence. Advanced Maya users can join the 3-day workshop on Organic Modelling and Advanced Rigging Techniques for Characters. All workshop fees is at P2,000. Only 15 participants per workshop will be accepted and each will be assigned a computer. Software packages to be used are After Effects, Maya, Photoshop, and Wings3D. Interested participants must register a week before the scheduled workshops. Log on to www.apc.edu.ph or call tel. nos. 852-9670 to 71 for details.

D1 Oils Asia Pacific gears up operations

D1 OILS ASIA & PACIFIC INC, A SUBSIDIARY of UK-based D1 Oils plc, is gearing up its operations here in the Philippines with its objective of setting up plantations of Jatropha curcas in all 13 regions of the country. D1 Oils plc was founded in 2002 and was listed in the London Stock Exchange in 2004. It is the pioneer in using the Jatropha curcas seeds as its primary source of feedstock for its biodiesel. The Jatropha tree grows in Africa, South East Asia and India. Here in the Philippines, Jatropha curcas is known locally as "tuba-tuba", "tubang-bakod" or "kasla". Richard Torres, country operations manager of D1 Oils, has been actively pursuing partnerships with government, cooperatives, farmer groups and other NGOs for the establishment of nurseries and plantations all over the country. D1 Oils Asia & Pacific is a sponsor of the World Renewable Energy Summit 2006 to be held in Beijing, China on May 15 to 17. Cooperatives and farmer groups, landowners, NGOs, LGUs, and other interested potential partners may contact Richard Torres or Ludette Q. Rosales at (02)687-6357 or (02)687-6360.

PSGP forum on VCO

THE PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP OF THE Philippines (PSGP) Foundation will be holding a meeting on May 13, at 12 p.m. at the 14th floor auditorium of the Cathedral Heights Building Complex (CHBC) South Tower of St. Luke's. The meeting is free and open to the public, and is being sponsored by Servier Philippines and St. Luke's Medical Center. For the current meeting, the medicinal properties of virgin coconut oil will be discussed by Dr. Conrado Dayrit, a multi-awarded physician and scientist who did the pioneering work on virgin coconut oil in the Philippines. The lecture will be followed by an open forum. For more information, interested parties can contact the PSGP at (02)631-1531 or the Movement Disorders Center of St. Luke's at (02)727-5552.

JRU launches La Pluma Scholarship

THIS YEAR, JOSE RIZAL UNIVERSITY (JRU) introduces the La Pluma Scholarship Grant to further its cause. This new scholarship program is extended to all graduating high school students with academic honors from schools recognized by the government. Application for the La Pluma Scholarship Grant is ongoing until May 10. Under the program, JRU will sponsor the full tuition fee of qualified high school valedictorians who will enroll in the university. Qualified HS salutatorians will enjoy a 75 percent scholarship grant while qualified students with first, second, and third honorable mentions will get a 50 percent scholarship grant. To apply for the scholarship, students should properly fill out the La Pluma application form available in JRU's Office of the Dean for Student Affairs. Interested parties may also download the form from the university's website www.jru.edu. For more information on the La Pluma Scholarship Grant, contact Lisa Saba, Dean of Student Affairs at tel. nos. 531-80-31 to 35 or e-mail lisa.saba@jru.edu.

9th Nat'l PREX confab

ALL PARISH RENEWAL EXPERIENCE (PREX) graduates are invited to join the 9th National PREX Convention at the Colegio de San Agustin, Biñan, Laguna on May 13 and 14. Early registrants can contact their Parish PREX secretariats or call Kuya Rodel (939-9542) or Kuya Domeng (931-8111).

Pilmico Baking Center 2006 Training schedule

THE PILMICO BAKING CENTER IN ILIGAN City wishes to announce the Diamond Bakery Training schedule for 2006. All bakers and bakery-owners alike are invited to join one of the 4 Diamond Bakery Training schedule which are as follows: May 15-27, July 10-22, Sept. 11-23 and Nov. 13-25. For interested applicants, e-mail at customer_first@pilmico.com or call our offices in Makati, Cebu and Iligan City.

Affordacall's One Two Treats extended

BAYANTEL'S ONE, TWO, TREATS PROMO has been extended until June 3. This special edition Affordacall prepaid card features GlaxoSmithKline Value Health medicines, Ambrolex OD and Zantac 75. Get quick relief from hyper acidity or long lasting relief from miserable colds using your special edition Affordacall prepaid card. With every purchase of the P100 Affordacall card denomination you get two free medicines from Glaxo, while the P300 card gives you two (2) free Ambrolex OD and four (4) free Zantac 75 depending on the card design. Visit any Watson's Pharmacy store in Metro Manila and present your special edition Affordacall prepaid card to redeem these free medicines.

1st events conference and exhibit slated

EVENTS MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT in the Philippines has evolved to become an effective strategy to promote a product, a service, and a cause. The 1st Events Asia Conference, Exhibition, and Trade show is set on June 6 to 8, at the Rockwell Tent in Makati City. The three-day event will showcase the latest trends in the events industry and will display the regions top event suppliers. The conference offers plenary, forum, interactive session, round table discussions and many opportunities for networking. Huge discounts and free complimentary gift will be given to "early bird" delegates and exhibitors. For more information about Events Asia Conference and Exhibit, visit www.events asiaforum.com, or call tel. nos. 893-9729 or 893-9996. E-mail inquiry at ablaxamana@nextstepevents.com.

Bits & Clips

45th ACI World Congress

PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo will be the keynote speaker for the 45th ACI World Congress. The ACI World Congress is an annual international gathering of financial markets practitioners from around the world. Expected to draw approximately 500 finance industry players and stakeholders, it is being organized by ACI Philippines, the local member-association of ACI-The Financial Markets Association. The 45th ACI World Congress will take place from May 25 to 27, at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City. For more information, visit http://www.aci-phils.com/worldcongress2006/, e-mail aci2006_secretariat@teamasia.com, or fax +632-757-3510 or 757-3511.

EWB, Fiti build GK homes

LAST MARCH 25, AROUND 300 EASTWEST-Bankers and Fiti employees, volunteered to build homes in the Gawad Kalinga (GK) Castañeda community in Barangay Namayan, Mandaluyong City and to teach and watch over the residents' kids, too, under the heat of the summer sun. That ordinary Saturday turned out to be a special day of sharing for everyone involved - with local residents, East West Bankers, computer specialists from the Fiti, and other Gawad Kalinga volunteers working side by side in the construction of the GK-Castañeda housing units, preparing and partaking of the after-work feast together, while learning and finding inspiration from one another in the process.

BUSINESS

BIR April collection seen up but short of goal

Target set at ₱79B, 26% higher than year-ago level

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL Revenue may have missed its ₱79-billion tax collection target in April, as it admitted finding the goal too high.

Deputy Commissioner Lucita Rodriguez said the agency was still determining the factors that made the April target difficult to hit. She noted though that the goal for the month was 26-percent higher than the BIR's actual tax collection during the same month last year.

Preliminary data showed that as of April 29, the BIR had collected about P69 billion in taxes, or P10 billion short of the target. But Rodriguez said the amount of the shortfall could still go down as the BIR had yet to complete its computation for the month.

Revenue Commissioner Jose Mario Bunag declined to comment pending the release of the official collection figure.

Although still short of the target, the collection as of April 29 was already 10 percent higher than the year-ago level. The agency's tax collection in April last year amounted to P62.935 billion.

The BIR is the government's biggest revenue contributor. Thus, its collection performance affects the state's budget position.

The government aims at reducing the budget deficit from P146.8 billion last year to P125 billion this year. To help meet the target, the BIR is tasked with collecting P675 billion for 2006.

Should the BIR register a collection shortfall in April, the gap would wipe out the excess collection it recorded in the first three months of the year.

In the first quarter, the BIR collected P135 billion in revenue, or P3.6 billion higher than the P131.4 billion target for the three-month period.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves earlier described the April fiscal targets (including those on revenue collection and deficit reduction) as "tougher" given the high revenue collection programmed for the period.

"The experience we had (in April) was not the same as that in the previous months," Teves said in a recent press briefing, but expressed confidence that the government was still on track of its full-year fiscal goals.

Over the medium term, the government is targeting to substantially improve its fiscal position by finally posting a budget surplus and reducing its nearly P4 trillion in debts.

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2 more firms expected to put up BPO ventures in RP

By Abigail L. Ho

TWO FOREIGN COMPANIES—ONE US-based and the other from the United Kingdom—are eyeing the country as potential sites for their call center and business process outsourcing ventures.

In an interview on the sidelines of yesterday's Software Innovations Philippines 2006 conference, Trade Undersecretary and Board of Investments managing head Elmer Hernandez said these two firms had sent teams of at least three people each to conduct due diligence on the country.

"We received queries from the principals of these two firms last week. The mere fact that they sent their people here to conduct due diligence is a good enough indication that they're serious about locating here," he said without identifying the prospective investors.

These companies, he said, were also scouting for other locations in the region.

"But since most of their competitors are already here, I'm sure they'll come in. But we have to fulfill their human resource requirements," he said.

The BOI, he said, assured these firms that they would be able to access quality human resources should they decide to locate here.

"It took us six months and a number of meetings to convince them to come to the country to take a look. They just want to make sure that their operations won't have any problems if they decide to come here," he said.

He said the BOI would likely recommend to these investors potential sites outside Metro Manila, includingCagayan de Oro and Dumaguete.

Apart from the two firms, he said the BOI was aiming at getting more foreign IT firms to make the Philippines one of their offshore business sites.

IT roadshows had been lined up for the year, with particular focus on Japanese and Chinese firms, he said. The US, Europe and Taiwan would also be included in the planned roadshows.

For Japan, he said the BOI was eyeing the areas of BPO, animation and engineering design. For China, the target included an entire range of IT-enabled services, not just call centers.

"We're aiming at three to four IT roadshows, provided that we'll have enough budget to do so," he said.

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Physical exercise can keep you mentally fit

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Juan

"ALL BRAWN, NO BRAIN" is not accurate. Physical exercise can actually help to keep you mentally fit. Exercise does not just build strong muscles; it also builds strong brains.

Studies have shown that people who engage in regular exercise have better levels of concentration, focus and memory, and faster reaction times than people who don't work out.

Why is exercise so good for the brain?

There are several theories why exercise is good for your most important organ. Exercise creates new blood vessels in response to the increased demand for oxygen and nutrients. A better blood supply means a better supply of oxygen and glucose, the fuel that runs your brain.

Exercise increases the concentration of norepinephrine, a brain chemical that acts as a modulator of other chemicals associated with the way we respond to stress and emotions. Stress can interfere with learning and memory since elevated levels of the stress hormone cortisol can damage the hippocampus, the part of the brain associated with these mental abilities.

Exercise "toughens" the body and brain by mimicking the physiological responses to stress like heightened blood pressure, faster heart beat, and increased muscular tension. If you are physically fit, you are better able to deal with stress and this could, in turn, improve your mental processes. As we all know from personal experience, it's hard to think clearly when we are stressed out.

Exercise makes nerve cells produce more "brain-derived neurotrophic factor" or BDNF, at least that has been observed in lab animals. BDNF acts like a "brain fertilizer," making nerve cells grow and multiply and strengthening their connections with other neurons. What's true for lab rats may also be true for gym rats.

Need to clear your mind? Got a problem you can't seem to solve? Take a walk. You just might "see the light." Walking not only improves blood flow to the brain but, like other forms of physical activity, it triggers the release of adrenaline and noradrenaline, chemicals that stimulate the brain.

Mentally young

Studies indicate that, compared with their non-exercising peers, seniors who work out at least three times a week are less likely to develop dementia. They also have better memory, learning ability, concentration, abstract reasoning, and "executive functions" (the ability to plan and organize).

A study of sedentary people aged 60-75 found that six months of walking for one hour three times a week led to a 15-percent improvement in mental tests even though their cardiorespiratory fitness improved only slightly.

Brain scans of men and women aged 55-79 with fitness levels ranging from sedentary to very fit found that exercise could reduce the age-related loss of brain tissue density, specifically in areas involved in everyday functioning. In other words, fit seniors had less brain shrinkage.

Young brains can benefit from exercise, too. In one study, young people aged 18-24 significantly increased decision-making speed and accuracy after running for 30 minutes on a treadmill.

Even younger brains need exercise. Many studies indicate that children who exercise perform better in school. A University of Illinois study found that fit children between 7 and 11 years old performed attention tasks faster and more accurately than their less fit classmates. A British study discovered that fit children aged 10 and 11 scored higher than average in their exams.

Smarter babies

Exercise might even help produce smarter babies. A recent study found that physically fit mice gave birth to pups who had 40 percent more brain cells than those born to couch-potato mice. The increase was in the part of brain having to do with learning and memory.

There is no proof yet that this happens in human beings but exercise during pregnancy has many other benefits anyway. So a fit mom-to-be is healthier than a non-exercising one.

How to exercise

A meta-analysis (an analysis of many studies) found that, for older adults, programs that combined aerobic exercise and strength training produced better results in improving mental fitness than aerobics or strength training alone.

This may not be true for younger individuals. Phillip Tomporowski, an exercise scientist at the University of Georgia, reviewed 43 studies and found that steady-paced aerobic exercise (as compared with high-intensity interval-type exercise) worked the best.

This is not to say that strength training and stretching are not good for you but aerobic exercise seems to be the type most helpful in boosting brain power.

While other scientists believe that at least 30 minutes of exercise is needed, Tomporowski believes 15-20 minutes of any kind of moderate-intensity exercise will result in benefits for the brain.

Listening to music while exercising more than doubled the test results for verbal fluency for cardiac rehabilitation patients compared with when they exercised without music. This may or may not be true for all people.

Research shows that exercising to exhaustion or over-training will fog up your brain. Exercising moderately is the smartest strategy.

Next week: Mental aerobics

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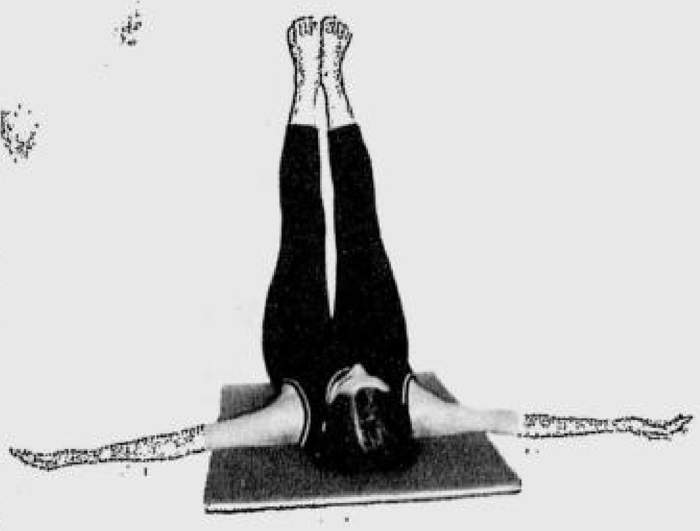
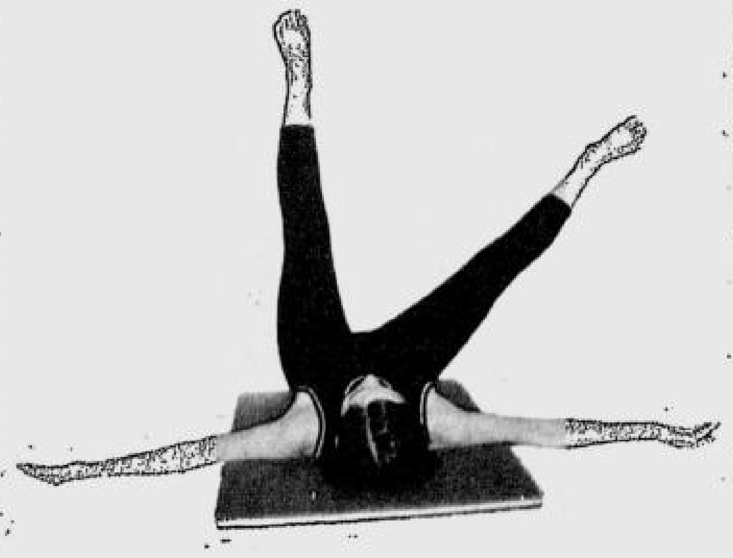
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

One-sided V legs





THIS PILATES-INSPIRED EXercise strengthens and stretches the inner thighs. Core muscles function as stabilizers.

Equipment:

Exercise mat

Exercise technique:

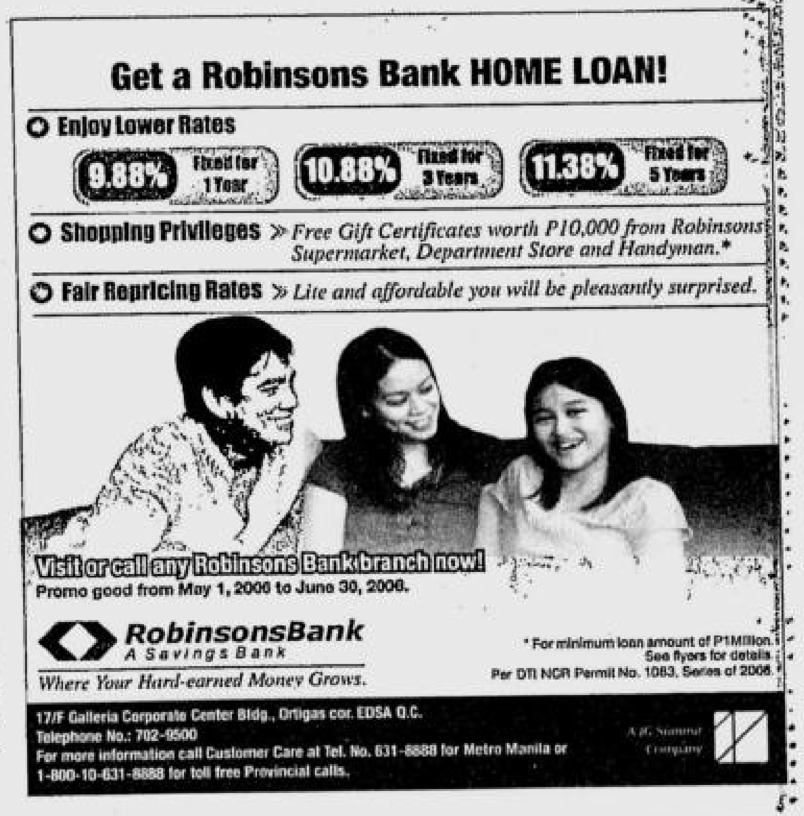
1. Lie down on a mat with your legs straight up in the air directly over your hips and your arms straight at shoulder level.
2. Inhale as you slowly lower your right leg to the side.
3. Exhale as you bring it back to the starting position.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions. Repeat on the other leg.

Performance tips:

1. Keep your hips stationary on the mat as you lower and lift your leg sideways.
2. Because this is a one-sided exercise, you will feel your abdominal muscles tightening as you stabilize your torso.
3. Lower your leg only as far as you can control and properly stabilize your torso on the mat.
4. Beginners should do this exercise against a wall for support.
5. Another variation is to do alternating legs.

Repetitions:

Do 10 repetitions on each side.



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SUPER pals: Metro's Ipe Cruz, PLDT's David Nugent and Pepper Teehankee

TOP models Patty Betita, with one of the winners of TechnoMarine's new watch, Jenni Epperson; and Tweety de Leon-Gonzales

MR. AND MS Serg Choukron, Tomy and TechnoMarine's Mia Florencio

TECHNOMARINE hotshot endorsers Jay-R, Nancy Castiglione, Bianca King and Marco Alcaraz

HOTSHOTS of TechnoMarine: Raffy Florence, Asia-Pacific managing director Serg Choukron, Renato Florencio, TechnoMarine president Franck Dubarry, Rex Mendoza and Jerome Garcia

HEAD-TURNERS Verns Buckley and Bianca Valerio

FRANCK Dubarry and ETC's Sam Oh

'Underwater' launch for new watch

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

THE WORLD-CLASS TECHNOMARINE, the hottest summer watch of the season, held a fabulous bash at the popular one-of-a-kind Club Embassy, *palanggas*, to celebrate its anniversary. TechnoMarine showed off awesome pieces from its latest watch and eyewear collections.

Superbly directed by no less than creative **Ariel Lozada**, the event recreated renowned photographer **Bruno Fabri**'s TechnoMarine Sea Campaign. Embassy was transformed into a cool underwater arena, perfect for Ariel L's finalé, as TechnoMarine's 2006 endorsers were introduced. They included sultry **Nancy Castiglione** and **Bianca King**, R&B prince **Jay-R**; and hot young face **Marco Alcaraz**.

The styling prowess of **Ignacio Loyola** was showcased in the fashion show. Top-rated models **Verns Buckley** and **Govinda Lloyd** were transformed into eye-catching replicas of TechnoMarine's "Sea Crown" and "Maine Lobster."

As always, the highlight of the happening was when TechnoMarine raffled off watches and eyewear at the end of the show to lucky TechnoMarine followers. **Bianca Valerio**, *palangga* **Jenni Epperson** and southern gent **JM Rordiguez** proudly brought home TechnoMarine's hottest picks.

Beaming with pride for their successful event were TechnoMarine hotshot president **Franck Dubarry** and Asia-Pacific hot managing director **Serg Choukron**, who both jetted in for the launch.

Headed by the brilliant **Rafael M. Florencio** and the low-profile secret weapon of Techno, adorable **Robert Castañeda**, no less, *palanggas*, Retail Operators Inc. has been TechnoMarine's exclusive Philippine distributor since 2001.

Scorcher

If there is a brand that's sizzling these hot summer days, it just gotta be Speedo, *palanggas*, with its scorching new Spring/Summer Collection 2006.

Gorgeous beach babe **Ornusa Cadness** and her surf hunk, **Borgy Manotoc**, showed us exactly how to hit the beaches when they strutted their stuff at the fab Speedo fashion show at the Greenbelt 4 Zen Garden. This sun-kissed, so-in-love pair, clad in the latest pieces from Beach Fashion, Watershorts, Shanghai and Rosa Cha lines, turned on the heat with a samba on the catwalk.

Hotshots of Speedo International Limited—**Amy Leung** and **Michael O'Donnell**, along with Speedo Phils.' **Chandru Mahtani**, **Vandana Mahtani** and **Manish Mahtani**—beamed with pride as this year's slinky, sizzling swimwear line was unveiled, dahlings.

The Speedo bigwigs said the newest designs combined athletic performance with innovative style, explaining why Speedo remained the world's leading swimwear brand.

So make your getaway to the beach with Speedo's Spring/Summer 2006 Collection, and be ready to make this your hottest season yet.

Exclusive gathering

Moi just had to go and be a part of an exclusive gathering of the past, current and future icons in fashion, entertainment and, *naturellement*, society. MasterCard hosted loads of priceless happenings that turned back the hands of time, *palanggas*.

Mezze, one of Makati's hippest joints, had a Faces-themed bash that brought to mind the most "in" place of the past decade, complementing it with its own refreshing Mediterranean fusion cuisine and ambiance.

Among the gorgeous hotshot people I saw partying were the main man, **Bobong Velez**; MasterCard vice president and senior country manager **José Rene Villa-Real**; our *palangga*, former Mayor **Mel Mathay**; Bulgari's hot **Mario Katigbak**; popular Rep. **Miguel Zubiri**; lawyer and newscaster, suave **Mike Toledo**; friendly neighbor, Nuvo and Citrus hotshot **Louie Ysmael**; eye-catching sultry actresses **Carmi Martin**, **Ina Raymundo** and **Rachel Lobangco**; model/photographer **Victor Besa**; **Rod Nepomuceno**; L'Oreal's **Leica Carpo**; actor **Ricky Davao**; comedienne **Giselle Sanchez**; hot models **Nicolette Bell** and **Tanya Escaler**; wonder PR boy **GP Reyes** and his love, attractive **Chicho Suarez**; **Andre Lhuillier**, **Lance Raymundo**, **Melissa Ledesma** and **Joseph Day**, plus so many other wow faces like them, dahlings.

The hip R&B sound of pulsating New York by the maestro DJ **Boyet Almazan** had everyone rolling and in a hip-grinding mood. It was a fun mix of great food, hot dancing, music and an interesting pack of people.

This fab event presented by the renowned MasterCard at Mezze was definitely a priceless moment for all, dahlings.

Elections

Those women of the All Nations Women's gang have elected their new officers headed by **Cristina Caedo** as president; and world traveler, vivacious **Zeny Cabral**, as its workaholic director, *palanggas*. No sooner had they chosen their top women than the group was already preparing for an afternoon Tea Musicale on May 11 at the Turf Room of the horsey set's Manila Polo Club. Chair of this must-go-to event is Zeny Cabral, no less. She is working with honorary chair **Narda Camacho** and the association's advisers **Lolita Mirpuri** and **Villa Granada de Guia**.

The musicale will be headed by professor **Raul Sunico**, who will play a Chopin concerto. Soprano **Camille Lopez** and tenor **Frankie Asiniero** will sing several arias and do a duet. **Chinggoy Alonso** will perform Broadway songs from "My Fair Lady," dahlings.

You can expect the gals to arrive in Ascot-style spring outfits with hats, in keeping with the motif of the affair.

Check it out. You'll be helping while having a great time, *palanggas*.

SPEEDO hotshots: Manish Mahtani, Amy Leung and Michael O'Donnell

DIMITRI Lamarlere of Credit Suisse and Dharmendra Guptra of Speedo

GOOD-LOOKING Miguel Gascon

THE LOZADA clan: young Anthony Lozada, with dad Bert and mom Zenas Lozada

ABS-CBN's Ernie Lopez

FERN Peña, Andrew Gloria of Golf King, Miguel Celdran, Crissan Celdran and Backie Celdran of Nike Park

CHANDRU Mahtani, Borgy Manotoc and Ornusa Cadness, Michael O'Donnell, Shereena Genomal and Vandana Mahtani

EYE-CATCHING Karel Marquez

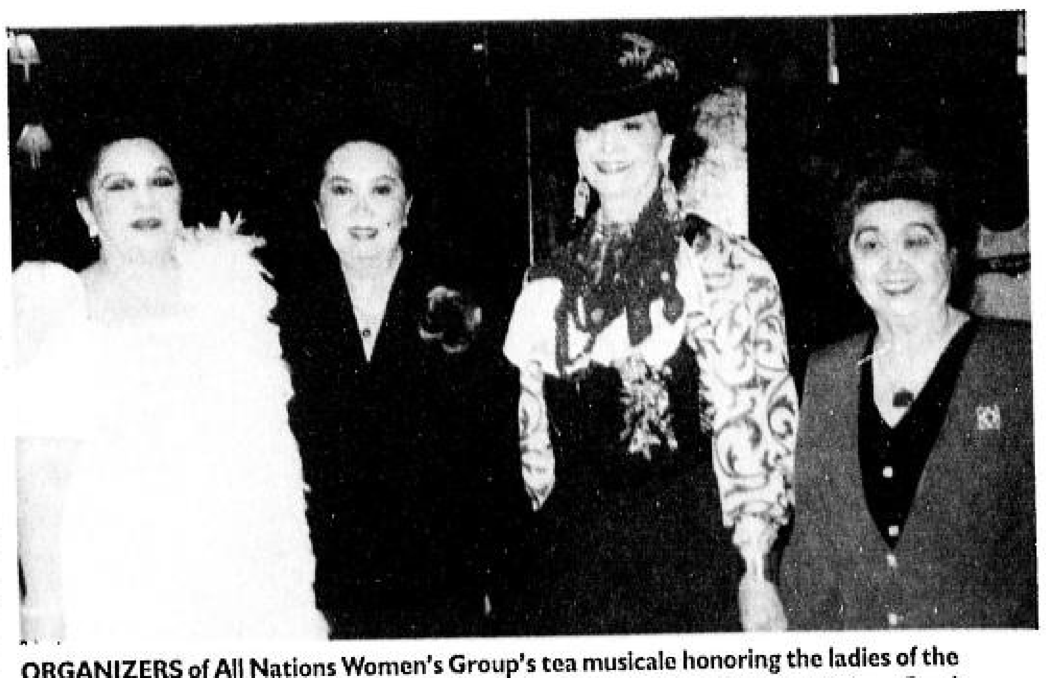
LADIES' man Sam Milby

SPIT-FIRE Carmina Pavia and southern royal Bibing Montelibano Villanueva

MUSICIAN and sport enthusiast Anton P. and multimedia artist Alex Pelayo

PRINCESS Viologo and MTV VJ Claire Olivar

CHRISTINE Zarandine, PR man and columnist Donnie Ramirez, sultry southern beauty Maricor Nieto and main man Bobong Velez



ORGANIZERS of All Nations Women's Group's tea musicale honoring the ladies of the diplomatic corps, include Zeny Cabral, chair of the special event; Cristina Galang Caedo, president; Lolita Mirpuri, adviser; and Villa Granada de Guia, member.

MISS INTERNATIONAL'S MULTIVITAMIN

Show-biz personality Sam Milby and reigning Miss International Precious Lara Quigaman are the new faces of Centrum. The new ad campaign is dubbed "I want to be complete." Through the ad, Centrum hopes to inspire viewers to do more and be more in their lives. Centrum is a product of Wyeth Consumer Healthcare, a division of Wyeth Philippines. It is the only brand that carries vitamins and minerals from A to zinc.

Workshop on May 13

SPA PROFESSIONALS is holding its fourth Practical Make-Your-Own Aromatherapy workshop May 13 (and every second Saturday of the month) at its training center in Parañaque, Sucat.

The workshop is designed for individuals, and retail store and spa owners.

It will include a short lecture and hands-on sessions.

Participants will make, among others, facial products, massage oils, linen sprays, scrubs and haircare products that they can take home.

The course is offered in conjunction with Spa Essentials (www.spaessentials.com.ph), a professional learning institute.

Spa Essentials is also offering a two-for-one promo on selected essential oils in 10-ml pack size.

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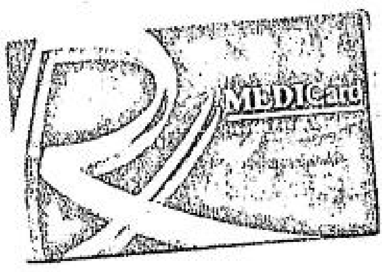
What are the signs and symptoms of Asthma?

The Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) defines asthma as a chronic inflammatory disorder of the airways in which many cells and cellular elements play a role. Asthma is characterized by recurrent episodes of wheezing, breathlessness, chest tightness and coughing particularly at night or in the early morning. Acute exacerbation are being interpersed with sypmtoms free period. Typically, attacks are short-lived and lasting for minutes to hours, afterwhich, the patients seems to recover completely clinically. However, there can be a phase in which patient experiences some degree of airway obstruction. This may be mild or much more serious with severe obstruction persisting for days or weeks. Chest examination may be variable from normal to wheezing to absent breath sounds depending on the severity of airway obstruction. Peak expiratory flow meter (PEF) which measures airflow limitation may help diagnose and monitor cause of asthma.

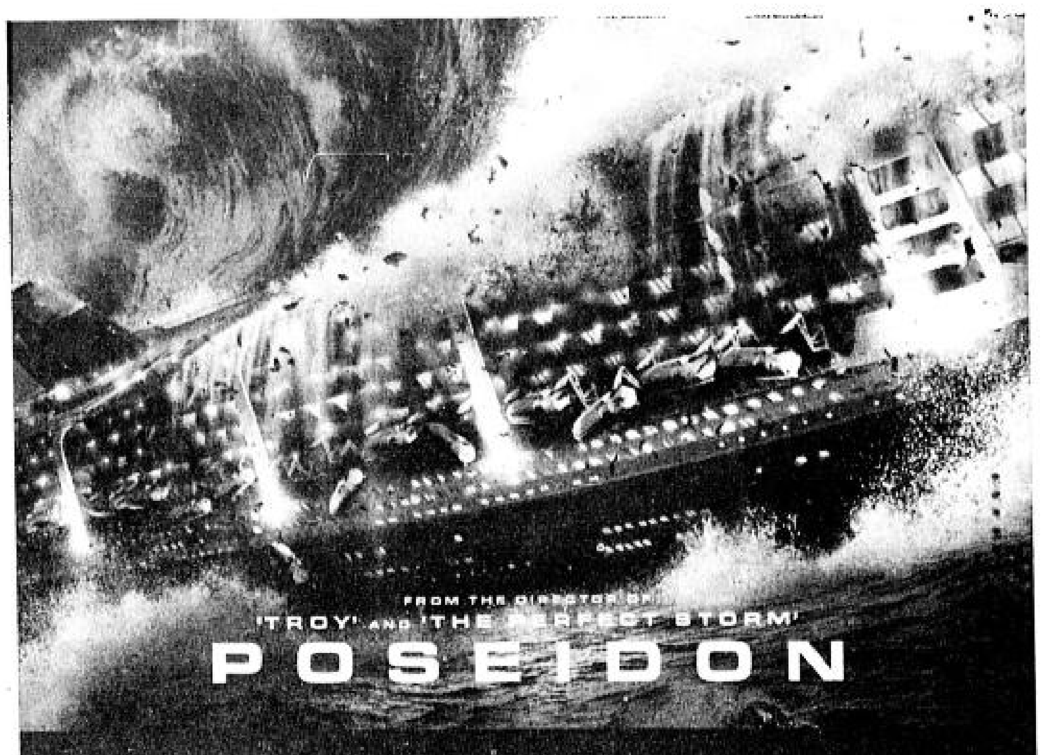


This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our medical service provider from Calamba Medical Center, Dr. Cynthia M. Rubio-Talla. She specializes in IM-Pulmonology and Diabetology. She grduated from Dela Salle University, College of Medicine in 1987 and later took her specialization training for Internal Medicine in 1991. She also completed her sub-specialty course for Pulmonology in 1993 and Diabetology in 2003. Dra. Talla is a fellow and diplomate of the Philippine College of Physicians and Philippine College of Chest Physicians. She is married to Dr. Vitus Talla and blessed with three children. MEDICard members may visit her for consultation services at Calamba Medical Center, Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 9am to 2pm and Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 2pm to 5pm.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

MEDICard [illegible]



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Cinema 6 - 1:30 PM, 3:45, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30
GLORIETTA 1
Cinema 1 - 1:00 PM, 3:20, 5:40, 8:00
Cinema 2 - 12:20 PM, 2:40, 5:00, 7:20, 9:40

GREENBELT 1
Cinema 1 - 11:30 AM, 1:50 PM, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50

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** Digital Sound & Guaranteed Seat Cinemas
Screening schedules are subject to change without prior notice
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13

GREENBELT 3
Cinema 1* - 1:25 PM, 3:40, 5:55, 8:10, 10:25
Cinema 4** - 12:50 PM, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
Cinema 5** - 2:30 PM, 4:45, 7:00, 9:15, 11:30
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Cinema 1 (THX) - 11:20 AM, 1:30 PM, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00, 10:10
Cinema 3 - 11:50 AM, 2:00 PM, 4:10, 6:20, 8:30, 10:40
MARKET! MARKET!
Cinema 1 - 12:50 PM, 3:00, 5:10, 7:20, 9:30
Cinema 5 - 12:20 PM, 2:30, 4:40, 6:50, 9:00
AYALA CENTER CEBU
Cinema 1 - 1:25 PM, 3:10, 5:15, 7:20, 9:45
Cinema 3 - 12:55 PM, 2:40, 4:45, 6:50, 9:15

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10 habits of wellness

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

HERE ARE 10 habits wellness enthusiasts and health aficionados may find worth remembering.

Eat well

There is no bad food—only bad diets and, worse, bad dieters. Your regular diet should contain basic nutrients: vegetables/fruits, carbohydrates, fiber, proteins, dairy, fats. A new food guide pyramid now includes a major component—water.

The three "musts" for life are oxygen, water and food. Without these three, one faces certain death. So eat to live but, for a healthy life, eat well. Remember that five small meals a day is recommended for better health management. This is because three hours after a meal, the body needs to replenish, via the food we eat, energy spent.

The best diet is moderation, one that includes all your basic needs. Any diet that excludes a component may not be balanced.

Drink well

Water is life. Your body may be suffering from dehydration even as you read this. Hourly intakes of one glass of water during your waking hours is ideal. Drink water that is clean and safe (preferably not distilled as it may have already been stripped of minerals). If you have frequent headaches, drink glasses of water. You may just be dehydrated.

Work well

Excellence in the work environment is certainly a notable standard. Love what you do and do what you love. The best kind of job they say is one that doesn't feel like a chore. While it is good to focus on your career, always give yourself enough time for…

Play

Playtime is "letting your hair down" for a reason. And that is to balance your energies. And if, in the process, you rediscover the "child in you," so much the better. It only means you can recapture the innocence and loving nature of the child you were once (and are still childlike by nature).

Pray

Give yourself some quiet time to connect with the Divine. This can only enlarge and expand your spirit. By tapping into the immortal in you, your own sense of divinity is affirmed and strengthened.

Learn

The human mind is an almost inexhaustible powerhouse. You can teach yourself new skills, adopt new ways and expand your knowledge. You can redefine yourself at any time, any point of your life. There's no one stopping you—except yourself.

Laugh

Even if life is all about living, there is such a thing as learning from your mistakes. Or, you can simply laugh at them. Taking life too seriously can lead to stress and eventually illness. Yes, laughter is still the best medicine. It's not a worn-out cliché but a medicinal truth. When you laugh, your brain releases endorphins (feel-good hormones), flooding the body with a sense of well-being. They are also called natural painkillers. So, the next time you have a problem, have a strong dose of laughter. It will only help you feel better.

Love

Only the greatest force on earth, its by-products (the result of tapping its powers) are healing, understanding, forgiveness, perseverance, kindness, selflessness, generosity. But before you give love away, generate it first in yourself and for yourself. Remember, one must have enough love inside in order to…

Share

The best policy of all is to be generous, share your time, energy and attention. The good news about wellness and how living by its standards of health you can certainly derive more pleasure in life. Also, share the best of who you are with humanity. Humankind, beginning with your family, would benefit from your presence in this world.

Relax

There is a time to simply enjoy doing nothing more than relax. Take a break. You deserve it. Or, better yet, plan your next vacation. Relaxation aims to recharge and revive you. So, go ahead. Sit back, take a deep breath and smile.

Love and light!

Nestle launches the Health and Wellness in School program. Visit www.choosewellness.com.ph

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An encounter with a Japanese swami

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

THE WORD "SWAMI" normally refers to an Indian spiritual teacher or guru, like Swami Premananda, Swami Nityananda, etc. In fact, the word is Indian in origin.

So it came as a small cultural shock for me to encounter a Japanese swami recently.

I met Swami Abe Kenji two weeks ago in Baguio City during the one-week seminar on Philippine spiritualism and mediumship conducted by faith healer Jun Labo and myself for a small group of people from Germany, England, Italy, France and Japan.

Swami Kenji struck me as the most unusual participant for several reasons. Not only was he the first Japanese swami I ever met, but he also could materialize objects, like the well-known Indian spiritual guru Sathya Sai Baba and Swami Premananda.

Kenji's background is also unusual. He holds a graduate degree in the physical sciences, worked as a Formula 3 race driver and test driver for Mazda. He was a singer, guitar player and composer. He gave up a promising career to pursue spirituality.

It all began with his overwhelming desire to learn how to materialize things, i.e. make things appear from nowhere, the way Jesus Christ did more than 2000 years ago, and the way modern spiritual masters in India could.

Non-believer

The scientist Kenji did not believe in God. But, after studying under several gurus in India, he was led little by little to a realization that nothing could be done without God. "Every one of them kept telling me that to be able to materialize things, one needed the help of God. In everything they did, God was involved," Kenji said.

But even after seeing many materializations in India, he still could not believe them. One day, his Indian guru told him, "Buy a cheap silver ring from a jewelry shop and bring it to me." After buying the ring, the guru told him to hold it in his hand, and to close his hand. "Do not open your hand until I tell you to do so."

Kenji did as instructed. Then the guru told him, "Now I want you to close your eyes and turn this silver ring into gold." He protested and told his guru he did not know how. "Just tell the silver to turn into gold."

Kenji then commanded the silver ring to turn into gold. When he was asked to open his eyes, he was surprised to see that the silver ring had indeed turned to gold.

"You see," said his guru with a smile, "you already know how to turn silver into gold."

Kenji later saw how his master could turn a gold ring to silver and back to gold again. But every time gold was converted to silver and back to gold again, its carat or purity diminished. Kenji showed us his gold ring which he said was originally 22 carats. "Now it is only 14 carats," after it had been reconverted to gold several times in the course of demonstrations.

Diamond

Swami Kenji fascinated me and the two German participants, Mathias and Martina, when he materialized in my palm a 1.25-carat diamond stone. It was brilliant and certainly beautiful. He chanted while swirling his arm and then put his open palm on top of my palm. I felt something drop to my palm. When he removed his hand, a diamond ring was on my palm.

I asked Kenji if the stone was a real diamond. He replied, "If it's important for you that it be real, it will be real. If not, it will not be."

I told him it was important for me to know. "Can I have it checked by a jewelry expert?" I asked. He said, "Yes, go ahead, you can have it checked, but the important thing is that a materialization took place."

I could not rest until I had the stone checked. So as soon as I was back in Manila, I went to a friend, an executive in a bank. They have a jewelry specialist who can check the genuineness of precious stones used as collateral for bank loans.

The verification took only a few minutes. Using two sensitive instruments, I was told the diamond was not real, but it also was not glass. The specialist was struck by the beauty of the stone's cut. "What material is this?" I asked her. She couldn't tell.

"If this is a real diamond, how much do you think is it worth?" She measured the size of the stone and said, "P150,000."

Energy

Since it is not a real diamond, I don't know how much it is worth but even if it's not a real diamond, I still intend to have it set into a ring because, not only is it beautiful and brilliant, it also emits a very strong energy.

I tested it with my dowsing rod and the energy was stronger than my quartz crystals. Kenji said these materialized objects could be used as talismans and amulets for protection. They are not just for decoration.

Stage magicians can pull a dove out of an empty hat through sleight-of-hand. It is possible that Swami Kenji is merely a good magician. But I don't think so, because the next day, he materialized a bigger "diamond," inside the empty and closed hand of Riza Lim, a yoga teacher who was with us.

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